



# TRIBUTES PAID TO STAB VICTIM

Report by Rob Cox

**A WOMAN who entered a doctors' surgery with a fatal stab wound has been named locally as Tina Billingham.**

Mother-of-two Ms Billingham, aged 50, arrived at Hawes Lane Surgery, Rowley Regis, on Monday afternoon and was taken to hospital but died a short time later.

A 54-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of murder following Monday's incident.

Flowers have been left outside the victim's home in Granville Road, Old Hill, and yesterday (Wednesday) neighbours paid tribute to her.

Phillip Ainge, aged 21, said: "Every time I spoke to her she was always very kind and caring. She has lived here as long as I can remember."

Hawes Lane Surgery reopened on Wednesday after closing on Tuesday due to the incident. Staff were unavailable for comment.

One of the floral tributes left outside Mrs Billingham's home, said: "Tina, rest in peace. Always loved and in our thoughts. You were a very kind person to everyone that knew you. RIP darling."

Councillor Chris Tranter, who represents the Rowley ward, said: "I am so shocked. When I heard it on the news I was in disbelief. This does not happen in my ward."

## Sympathy

"Our deepest sympathy goes out to this lady's family at this time."

Neighbours living near to Hawes Lane Surgery also spoke of their shock following the incident.

Glen Meredith, aged 54, of St Giles Avenue, said: "We heard that the lady had entered the doctor's surgery and was bleeding heavily. I was shocked and saddened to hear that she didn't survive."

"I saw the helicopter land and the next minute the road was cordoned off. I have lived here for about six years but this is just something that you don't expect would happen. This is a nice community."

A spokesman for West Midlands Police, said: "Officers were called to Rowley Healthcare on Hawes Lane, at around 3.50pm on Monday, following reports that a woman had arrived at the doctors surgery with a stab wound. The woman was treated by medical staff and taken to hospital but despite their best efforts it became apparent that there was nothing that could be done to save her life. Enquiries are on-going but police are not looking for anyone else."

## EMOTIONAL DAY OUT FOR VETERAN VIV AT MUSEUM



James 'Vivian' Wollason celebrates his 100th birthday at Black Country Living Museum with his chauffeur for the day Geoffrey Bramwell

A VETERAN celebrated his 100th birthday in style, with a little help from the Black Country Museum.

James 'Vivian' Rollason, known as Viv to his family, was born right next to the museum in Park Lane, Tipton, on February 5, 1917, but never quite got around to visiting.

So for his birthday, he and eight members of his family had a special day courtesy of the museum and its staff.

Viv, who lives in Coseley, was personally greeted by his own chauffeur, costumed guide Geoffrey Bramwell, who drove him around

the museum in a 100-year-old Black Country-made car.

Costumed characters then all gathered to surprise Viv in the Bottle & Glass Inn – the museum's pub – greeting him with a cake, balloons and a hearty chorus of 'Happy Birthday'.

Viv fought in the Second World War in the 79th Armoured Division where he worked as a tank engineer after his call up at the aged of 23. He said: "I born in the First World War, fought in the Second but won't bother with another."

After the war Viv worked in of-

fices in Horsley Bridge and had an assistant typist, Joan, who would later become his wife of 55 years.

Viv said of his special birthday treat: "The day has nearly brought tears to my eyes. It's very kind."

"I still keep active, I live independently and I enjoy cooking and gardening so the truth is I don't feel old at all!"

He was joined by family members including daughter Judy Hughes, 60, and granddaughter Katie Thornton, 25, as well as his late wife's cousins Barbara Frolich and Mary Robinson, both aged 81.



Young Viv in his Army days

## DEMOLITION

### Blaze-hit pub will be knocked down

A DERELICT pub which was left in a dangerous state after being hit by a series of fires is to be knocked down.

The former Dolls House in Newbury Lane, Oldbury, was fenced off in December after the latest blaze led to concerns its roof could collapse. Sandwell Council has confirmed the pub will now be demolished following talks with its owners.

West Bromwich West MP Adrian Bailey had called for action over the building and said it would be a relief for residents that it was going to be demolished.

## RETAIL

### New Saturday street market set to open

A NEW outdoor market will be held in Stourbridge for the first time on Saturday.

The weekly market on Lower High Street and Coventry Street will be every Saturday, selling food, crafts and other goods.

LSD Promotions initially wanted to hold a market on Thursdays in High Street and Market Street, closing off the roads off to traffic. But it was forced to re-think the proposals following opposition from shop bosses.

## COLLISION

### Girl 'stable' after crash kills her dog

A SCHOOLGIRL who suffered serious leg injuries in a road accident in which her pet dog died is now in a 'stable' condition in hospital.

The 15-year-old was walking beside Coombs Road in Halesowen when she was hurt as a result of a collision between a silver Volkswagen Bora and a silver Kia Sportage at about 4.30pm on January 27, at the junction with Amber Road.

Both drivers stopped at the scene and are assisting officers with the investigation, but police are appealing for anyone who witnessed the accident to call PC Alex Ingram via 101.

## INSIDE

### WIN TICKETS TO WEDDING SHOW



PAGE 10

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2 CONTENTS

MARK ANDREWS	6
LETTERS	7
THEATRE REVIEWS	12
MOTURING NEW REG SPECIAL	17
THE FAST TICKET	25
TV GUIDE	28 - 30
PROPERTY	34
SPORT	39 & 40
CONTACT US	

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# Sir Lenny has a nose for comedy talent



Lenny Henry hosts club night

DUDLEY-BORN comedian Lenny Henry will host a night of talent and laughter at a Birmingham comedy club next month in aid of Comic Relief Live.

A series of unique comedy gigs hosted by familiar Comic Relief faces will visit four UK cities for Red Nose Day. Comic Relief Live in Birmingham will see Lenny Henry host a night of fresh raw talent on February 22 at The Glee Club in the Arcadian Centre, off Hurst Street.

Sir Lenny said: "It will be an honour to host Comic Relief Live in Birmingham, I can't wait to share the stage with the best up and coming comedians on the circuit. Being able to profile the future stars of the comedy world will be a real thrill and I'm excited to see what the night will bring."

Nine new noses will be released as part of the fundraising for the Red Nose Day, set to take place this March.

Singer and songwriter Ed Sheeran, whose recently announced concerts at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena were instant sell-outs, will be among a host of comedians and celebrities supporting

this year's Red Nose Day, on March 24. These also include Stephen Hawking, Warwick Davies, Hugh Dennis, Russell Kane, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders.

Nine different nose characters will be coming to life in a digital comic strip game with celebrities providing the voices. Noses be available to buy in special surprise bags. Visit [rednoseday.com](http://rednoseday.com) for ticket and venue information.

Sir Lenny will also be seen in a dramatic role in the new series of Broadchurch on ITV.

# Schools unite in £60m trust led by college

A NEW £60 million multi-academy trust which will support more than 8,500 pupils will be launched across Dudley.

The Dudley Academies Trust will be sponsored by Dudley College and bring together Castle High School, Hillcrest School and Community College, Holly Hall Academy and High Arcal School, so they can share resources and expertise.

College bosses will also plough half a million pounds into the trust to 'kick start the process'. The move has been given the green light by the Schools Commissioner for the West Midlands and the Department for Education and is to start in September.

Dudley College principal Lowell Williams said: "Bringing together the combined strengths of four secondary schools alongside Dudley College will give us the best chance of providing outstanding technical education to Dudley's young people."

"We know that educational outcomes are not as high as they should be and we will work tirelessly to address this."

"Our plans are aspirational, not only for the development of our teaching and learning strategies and our curriculum, but also for the future transformation of the schools' estates."

## Sponsor

"As a sponsor, the college will release up to half a million pounds to the trust to kick start this process. We recognise that current Government plans significantly reshape the role of local authorities in compulsory education. We are delighted that the Schools Commissioner for the West Midlands has put her faith in Dudley College and our local school partners to bring about a transformation of pre-16 education in the borough."

Bosses say that the proposal emerged following a 'lengthy consideration and meticulous planning'.

A trust board chaired by Mr Williams will be established and a chief executive officer will also be recruited. Schools will retain their own identities, management and leadership. Once constituted, the Dudley Academies Trust with the college will annually support 8,500 young people with an operating income in excess of £60m.

## Join up by order of the Peaky Blinders



Shelby brothers - gangster drama Peaky Blinders ignited a craze for 1920s style caps and pocket watches

HOW do you fancy starring in the next series of Peaky Blinders? Well this could be your chance.

If you're a young man in good physical shape and handy with your fists, you may be in luck.

Casting calls have been advertised for a 'pivotal role' in series four of the 1920s-set TV drama about Brummie gangsters, which has become an international hit via Netflix.

No previous acting experience is required but you do need to be

between the ages of 18 to 25 and be able to box. The call has been put out on several posters in gyms around Birmingham. It reads: "Must be a confident boxer and physically fit."

## Email

Those who fit the role are asked to email [pb4casting@gmail.com](mailto:pb4casting@gmail.com).

The last time there was an open casting call for Peaky Blinders, hundreds queued for up to a mile around the block in Digbeth to

audition for two roles. Harry Kirtton from Northfield, then 15, was chosen to play the youngest Shelby brother, Finn, and Jordan Bolger from Coventry became gang member Isiah, the son of preacher Jeremiah Jones, played by Benjamin Zephaniah.

Filming for series four starts in March, with creator Steven Knight saying last month that scripts had been finalised. The crew are also expecting to film at the Black Country Living Museum again.

# Woman died after crash near Merry Hill shops

A WOMAN who was seriously injured when she ended up underneath a car in a crash on a busy route near Merry Hill has died.

Officers have arrested a 23-year-old man, from Brierley Hill, on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving.

An appeal has been launched for the owners of a white Audi TT, a white Citroen DS and a white Seat Ibiza seen on Pedmore Road, Brierley Hill, at the time of the two-car smash to come forward to help the investigation.

Police shut Pedmore Road, in Brierley Hill, near the shopping centre on Friday afternoon after being called to the junction with The Gateway at around 2pm, following the crash between a black Ford Focus ST and a blue Ford Mondeo.

A 74-year-old woman, who was a passenger in the Mondeo, was taken to hospital with severe head and spinal injuries.

West Midlands Ambulance Service said she had been found underneath one of the cars by paramedics who treated her. Police confirmed she had later died from her injuries.

Her 85-year-old husband, who was driving, also received hospital treatment for minor injuries but was later discharged.

Sergeant Alan Wood said: "The investigation is in its early stages and enquiries will continue."

Call Sgt Wood or his team at the regional collision investigation unit on 101.

# Visitors to valley pay £18k to park

VISITORS to Sandwell Valley Country Park have paid out more than £18,000 in the first three months since parking charges were introduced.

Controversial parking fees were brought in at the beauty spot for the first time in November.

Drivers now have to pay from 40p for an hour up to £2 for more than four hours. Those who don't pay face fines of £50.

A total of £18,326 has been generated from the pay machines.

Sandwell Council bosses said all the cash would be invested back into maintaining the site.

The authority came under fire when the charges were announced last year. Hundreds signed a petition against the plans to end free parking.

# Lecture on history of drinking water

VISITORS are welcome to hear how the Black Country first got clean water at a Black Country Society lecture by David Moore, chairman of Lichfield Waterworks Trust, on February 22 at Dudley Canal Trust venue The Portal, off Birmingham New Road, at 7.30pm.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

## Well-wishers back football hero Chris

MESSAGES of support have gone out to Walsall football star Chris Marsh after it was revealed he suffered a brain haemorrhage. The 47-year-old made over 400 appearances for the club.



Chris Marsh

Marsh, who grew up in Sedgley, joined Saddlers as a trainee in 1986 and won promotion in 1995 and 1999 before leaving in March 2001 – two months shy of another promotion.

Walsall's official account tweeted: "Club wish Saddlers legend & former @ntfc star Chris Marsh a speedy recovery after learning of pre Xmas brain haemorrhage #getwellsoon"

## Zoo cleans up neighbouring site

DUDLEY Zoo has extended its work with native species by helping clear a piece of important ecological land on its doorstep.

Working alongside Dudley Countryside Services, the zoo's conservation officer Chris Leeson helped with work at Peggy's Meadow – located between the attraction and the Black Country Living Museum. Mr Leeson said: "The land is a natural meadow and is listed as a site of local importance for nature conservation, as well as being a home for rare orchids in the past, which we hope will return. It had become overgrown."

The zoo's three giraffes benefited from the work, as the team sent them a pile of branches to chew, while smaller branches will be climbing aids in the small primate enclosures.

## Cricket club make anniversary plea

A CRICKET club, which is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year, is appealing for local companies to get behind its celebrations.

Stourbridge Cricket Club is planning a series of events to celebrate its landmark year including matches against Worcestershire Cricket Club legends, The MCC and an invitational XI versus Worcestershire County Cricket Club.

Now it is appealing for local companies to show their support in the special anniversary program or by donation prizes for a grand raffle.

For further information, contact Mark Ashbourne on 07506 747619 or email ma004g2691@blueyonder.co.uk

## Jersey Boys tribute

VARIETY show Oh What A Nite, featuring Four Seasons tribute act The Jerseys, is at Birmingham city centre's Crescent Theatre on Sunday evening. The show also features comedian Leye D Johns and The Viva Showgirls. See www.crescent-theatre.co.uk or call 0121 643 5858.

## Business levy could bring in £120k to boost town

PROPOSALS to create the borough's first Business Improvement District (BID) and generate thousands of pounds to improve trade in Halesowen were set to be given the go ahead this week.

BIDs are made up of local businesses, which each pay a levy, a small percentage of a business's rateable value, to the BID company.

Dudley Council's cabinet was yesterday (Wednesday) being asked to approve the proposal for the Halesowen BID.

The proposal put forward by the Halesowen BID organisers, supported by the Halesowen Chamber of Trade and other organisations, estimates that approximately £120,000 each year could be generated via the levy.

Those funds would then be used on improvements, decided by members of the BID group, on issues like improved security, events, promotion and the environment.

It would be ring-fenced to spend on specific projects agreed by the businesses in the BID for the benefit of trade in their area.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, Dudley Council's cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "There are more than 200 BIDs operating nationally, which have a proven track record in bringing businesses together to improve their districts, attract additional funding and promote what they have to offer."

"We now have an exciting opportunity to introduce the first BID here in the borough."

## Going Gaga for Brum concert date

POP superstar Lady Gaga will be coming to the West Midlands later this year, as details of the pop superstar's world tour were announced.

She is lined up to play at the Barclaycard Arena on October 15. Tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) and are expected to sell out fast.

The announcement of Lady Gaga's new Joanne tour comes on the back of her Superbowl half-time performance which was watched by hundreds of millions of TV viewers around the world on Sunday. Her fifth studio album Joanne was her fourth consecutive chart-topping album

Tickets for the Barclaycard Arena date go on general sale from 9am at www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 33 88 222.

## Funeral date for sweet-maker Ted

THE funeral of Dudley sweet-maker Ted Gray, who took over the family business from his father, also Ted, in the 1960s will be held tomorrow (Friday) at 11.30am at St Edmund's Church, Castle Hill.

# Call for pupils to get involved with firms

A NEW youth chamber to involve young people in the Black Country in influencing the business world has been launched.

The Black Country Chamber of Commerce has set it up to involve pupils from academies and secondary schools.

Chamber chief executive Corin Crane said the first meeting was held at the Q3 Academy in Great Barr involving two representatives each from Walsall Academy, Windsor High School in Halesowen and Highfields School, Wolverhampton.

University of Wolverhampton business studies graduate Grant Mace chaired the initial meeting. He said: "From speaking to our member businesses many are really keen to work more closely with

schools and involve young people. A lot of them want their workforce to be younger and more diverse and many want to give something back to the local area."

He explained that the ideas coming from the new youth chamber would be fed into the parent chamber.

### Exciting

"The initial meeting discussed what the chamber package for schools should be and what young people wanted from businesses."

"There was a clear view that schools want to see more exciting speakers from a more diverse range of businesses coming out to visit them as well as

more behind the scenes visits to our bigger business members," said Mr Crane.

The youth chamber has also suggested the establishment of question time sessions with local businesses and Dragons' Den style events.

"The youth chamber also wants to see more done to engage the imagination of young people," he added.

Mr Crane said the youngsters could also have an important role in working with the main chamber and members in creating social media strategies.

Schools that would like to get involved with the youth chamber can contact the chamber schools co-ordinator Catrin Guy on 01902 912305 or via e-mail to catringuy@blackcountrychamber.co.uk

# Hackers target schools, NHS and pub in attack

A CYBER attack was launched against schools, pubs and an NHS trust in the Black Country by hackers claiming to support the Kurdish army

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Board was among the organisations targeted.

All Saints Primary School in West Bromwich, Perton Middle School in Wolverhampton and The Holly Bush pub in Cradley Heath were also hacked, as was Staffordshireshortbreaks.co.uk

The messages show that those who hacked the website then state 'long live to peshmarga' and a Kurdish flag. They also come with message 'Kurdish Hackers Was Here'.

The peshmarga is the army of Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq, which are currently fighting ISIS in both Iraq and Syria.

It is believed the hackers managed to break in via outdated versions of WordPress, a website provider.

### Alerted

All Saints Primary School headteacher Jackie Beech was alerted about the cyber attack by a parent.

Ms Beech said: "We told our IT team and it was quickly taken down."

On Staffordshireshortbreaks.co.uk, the hackers attacked a holiday review posted in May last year.

It is hosted by Laurels Tech Web Design. Owner Phil Tester said he believed the site was hacked as the WordPress software had not been updated but the problem had been fixed.

Also targeted was the website for the Holly Bush in Newtown Lane, Cradley Heath. Owner Dave Francis said: "I find it slightly amusing, I've got nothing against the Kurds. I'm happy for them to love the Bush."

He said his website was designed by a friend. He added: "It is scary to think what else they can hack, such as bank accounts."

University of Wolverhampton maths and computing principal lecturer Tony Proctor, who specialises in cyber security, said the problem was often linked to websites using out of date software.

He said: "Websites using out of date software do so at their peril. The hackers will often look for out of date software which leaves websites vulnerable. It is important users make sure they have the latest update."

## Gemma's new tea room wins praise



Gemma Pedley at her tea room with MP James Morris, who says it is a 'great addition' to the High Street

A BUSINESSWOMAN from Halesowen who lives with autism has been praised by her MP for setting up a tea room in a town centre.

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris said the English Rose Tearoom, opened by 25-year-old Gemma Pedley, was a 'great addition' to the High Street.

Miss Pedley was diagnosed with autism aged 14. She opened the tea room in December which

serves breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea for shoppers.

She said: "This is something I have always wanted to do since being a little girl. Growing up with autism has been quite stressful and challenging throughout my childhood and teenage years, and I never thought I could achieve anything."

"I've overcome so many fears and learnt so much about myself."

Mr Morris said: "The English

Rose Tearoom will be a great addition to the High Street, and Gemma, with the help of her family and friends, has opened a really friendly and welcoming environment."

"Gemma has proven that if you have a goal, and the passion, you can achieve anything you like."

Autism West Midlands is working with Gemma to help provide work experience and training for those who have autism.



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## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THE most fascinating aspect about the online petition against a state visit for Donald Trump is the geographical breakdown. The areas with the highest rates of people signing the petition are London, Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow and Edinburgh – pretty much identical to the results of last June’s referendum on the European Union. If you’re against Trump, you may well be against Brexit. And you’re probably in a minority.

THE strangest thing about Donald Trump’s “Muslim ban” is not that it’s racist or Islamophobic but that it is so stupid. Most US terrorism is committed by home-grown loonies who either have a US passport or none at all. Trying to keep out terrorists by banning visitors from certain countries is about as useful as a chocolate musket at the Alamo.



THIS is probably not the right health message to take from the death of John Hurt, as we try hard to stick to two or three units of alcohol per day, plus a booze-free day every week. But we are told that at his worst, Hurt was slinging seven bottles of wine a night down his neck. He still made it to 77.

AND talking of booze, farewell to our Christmas cake. Mrs Rhodes’s 2016 masterpiece was steeped in rum and spent the final weeks of its life fermenting merrily in the cake tin. I swear the last few slices were slightly fizzy and left the mouth numb, like a dentist’s injection. The trouble with such epic cakes is that you know, no matter how hard you try to repeat the recipe, it will never be the same again. As Richard Harris told us.

WORD of Mouth (Radio 4) came from Birmingham and explained how the Midland expression blarting, meaning to cry, came from the word bleating. What it didn’t explain was the expression an old Brummie mate of mine would use to describe someone who was upset: “She was blartin’ like Friday.” Why Friday? Any ideas?

**Don’t miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star**

# Appeal to remove toll to combat M5 delays

**CALLS are being made for the M6 Toll to be made free to drivers during a major road-works scheme, which will see the speed limit cut to 30mph on part of the M5.**

Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling is calling for urgent action to ensure delays during the 18-month scheme on the M5, between West Bromwich and Oldbury, are kept to a minimum.

By Judith Hawkins

There are fears of gridlock misery in the Black Country as a result of the work on the motorway.

It was announced last week that the speed limit between Junction 1 and 2 of the M5 would be reduced to just 30mph as work is carried out on the Oldbury viaduct – which is crossed by 160,000 vehicles a day – from April.

Councillor Eling suggested removing charges from the toll road during the period to help ease congestion on the M5.

## Misery

He said: “Highways England must recognise and deal with the massive impacts on our local roads this work create.

“Our concern is that the impact on the local network does not kill West Bromwich and Oldbury with 18 months of gridlock misery for local people.

“If our roads are gridlocked it would have serious consequences for the borough and could seriously affect our local economy and

make our residents’ lives a misery for 18 months.”

He added: “We have made a number of suggestions to Highways England that we feel could help to reduce the effects on the stretch between Junction 1 and 2 and are hopeful that they take them on board.”

“We are pressing Highway England to ensure that traffic flows through our stretch of the M5 are reduced by encouraging drivers who do not want to use Junction 1 and 2 to use the M42 and M6 routes. We have also made it plain though that the slip roads at Junction 1 and 2 should remain open for local traffic.”

Highways England project manager Alastair Warnes said: “Work to repair the M5 Oldbury viaduct is vital and cannot be put off. We appreciate a busy stretch will be affected but we do everything possible to keep traffic moving, minimise disruption and maximise safety.”

## Thugs attacked taxi driver



Sheakh Arbaz after the attack. Picture by Shaz Saleem

A TAXI driver has told how he feared he would be killed when he was brutally attacked by two passengers.

Sheakh Arbaz was punched repeatedly as he sat in the driver’s seat waiting to be paid. His attackers only stopped when people emerged from nearby homes having been alerted by the driver’s screams. But the thugs ran off with around £50 of his takings, his mobile phone and car keys.

Mr Arbaz, who drives for ABM Taxis, picked the pair up from Stourbridge town centre at 4.30am on Saturday. They asked to be taken to The Village Hotel but then directed him to Hallchurch Road in Holly Hall. As Mr Arbaz pulled up he spotted one of the men trying to burn the back seat and asked what they were doing. One got out and approached the driver’s side. The father-of-four wound down his window expecting payment but the man grabbed his keys and demanded money. He was then attacked.

Mr Arbaz was taken to Russells Hall Hospital for stitches to his face.

The passengers are described as white and in their early 20s. Call police on 101.

## Job pledge could be extended for a year

COUNCIL bosses in Sandwell are set to continue its ‘Jobs Promise’ scheme to make no compulsory redundancies for another year – after totting up more than £500,000 of savings since it was launched.

The pledge, which gives workers job security and the council a far greater flexibility, was launched in April 2015 and is due to run out at the end of the financial year and this week was being considered.

Council chiefs say that the deal, which has saved people from compulsory redundancy and enabled the council to avoid spending over half a million pounds on payments, should be extended for another 12 months. At the time of the launch of the award-winning scheme chief executive Jan Britton described the scheme as “good for staff, for residents and for the council.”

## Cost

His comments came after Sandwell had shed almost 400 jobs, 39 of them compulsorily at a cost of about £6 million, and restructuring the council after more than £280m in cuts from its budgets in five years.

Under the deal, employees facing redundancy get the opportunity to retrain and be offered another job with the council, which has otherwise frozen all but essential recruitment of new workers.

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## Memorabilia fair will help fund charity

PEOPLE living with dementia will benefit from the first Stourbridge Vintage Memorabilia and Collectors Fair.

Specialist dealers will be travelling from all over the country to participate in the fair at the town's historic Bonded Warehouse on April 30.

There will be specialist tables offering a wide range of memorabilia and collectables donated by the general public and from celebrities in the world of show business and sport.

Profits from this special event will be donated to Alzheimer's Society to support local services, research and campaigning.

Stourbridge MP Margot James MP said: "It is wonderful that money will be raised for Alzheimer's Society in such an innovative way, in a historical and well known part of Stourbridge."

"I am sure that the wider community will engage with and support the event, and raise much needed funds to help dementia sufferers."

"Thirty-eight per cent of the population know a family member or friend with dementia and it is vital that research continues to help sufferers and their families."

The warehouse was built in 1776 and is sited on the regenerated Canal Wharf in the centre of Stourbridge.

For more information call 07971 624627 or email [jwc@corstone.co.uk](mailto:jwc@corstone.co.uk)

## Derelict warehouse is to become 16 flats

A DERELICT warehouse is to be converted into homes. Plans for 16 flats on the former Billinge Holdings site in Careless Green, Wollscote, have been given the go-ahead. The scheme will enhance the site, according to developer G1 Sykes. Some buildings will be demolished but not a heritage building, a former chain makers'.

# Political clash is brewing over council tax increase

## Google help pupils explore virtual world



Kirri Gooch from Google Expeditions with pupils James Green, Lottie Shuker and Leah Walker at Manor Way Primary Academy

EXCITED pupils at a Halesowen school were joined by a Google team member to take a field trip with a difference – the explorers never had to leave the school.

Children from Manor Way Primary Academy were taken on the virtual field trip with the unique 3D Google Expeditions kit.

It allowed them to take a journey to the moon, under the ocean to the

Great Barrier Reef and to the rainforest of Indonesia.

The opportunity came after the school got in touch with the team from the world famous internet company after hearing about Google Expeditions.

Kirri Gooch, a Google associate, left the pupils amazed with the unique visionary equipment that took them into a virtual world.

One of the pupils said 'it was like really being there' and another 'this has been wicked, the best thing ever'.

The school will now be downloading the Google App so that virtual trips around the world – and even around the body – can be a part of their learning process.

Meanwhile, the school is asking for donations of unwanted smart phones and their chargers.

COUNCIL tax is set to rise by almost five per cent across Dudley. Chiefs have announced plans to increase council tax by the maximum amount allowed without triggering a referendum, taking advantage of a Government decision relax laws on local tax hikes.

Councils had previously only been allowed to increase the amount by four per cent a year but can now go further to fund social care.

Budget proposals published in November, before the Government's announcement, had suggested Dudley Council would opt for a four per cent rise. The 4.99 per cent increase would mean the average household paying £1.12 extra each week from April.

Three per cent will go towards social care and two per cent on funding other services.

The plans look set to spark a row at Dudley Council House as opposition councillors slammed the move. The Labour-controlled council insist the increase is necessary due to its dire financial state, needing to save £26 million over the next three years.

### Block

The UKIP group insists the hike of almost five per cent would place too much of a burden on taxpayers.

Labour could fail to get the proposal passed as it does not command a majority at the council house. But that would require the Conservatives and UKIP to join forces to outnumber Labour councillors.

Dudley's finance boss Councillor David Sparks said: "We continue to find ourselves in unprecedented times of financial pressure as a result of reduced funding from national Government. I should also stress that if this is approved we will still be the lowest council tax rate in the Black Country."

## High price of smoking for public purse

SMOKING costs councils in the Black Country and Staffordshire more than £50 million a year.

The Action on Smoking and Health group warns that the unhealthy habit is adding to the social care crisis by putting a burden on local authorities to fork out millions on care for people with smoking related illnesses.

In 2015/16 smokers in Dudley racked up the highest cost in the Black Country of £9.3m while Sandwell Council forked out £7.6m. In Walsall smoking cost the council £7.1m while in Wolverhampton it cost £6.9m.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "The effect of smoking on people's health and wellbeing inevitably has a significant impact on social care and other council services."

The figures were included in an all-party Parliamentary group Smoking and Health Report.

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IN MY VIEW  
with Mark Andrews

# Slippers at school is just a step too far

THE headmistress of a school in Derbyshire has come up with a, ahem, unconventional approach to school uniform.

Emma Titchener is encouraging youngsters to wear slippers in the classroom, saying it makes them more relaxed.

Yeah I bet it does. What next? Novelty onesies?

Actually, having seen the pictures of Findern Primary School, that wouldn't come as a total surprise. It certainly appears to have a laid-back approach to education.

One of the photos shows a couple of children relaxing on a bright-red sofa. Another shows a teacher in furry footwear sat in front of a giant flat-screen telly. It looks more like a slightly tacky health spa than a place of learning.

Now I don't suppose it ever occurred to Mrs Titchener, but in a few years' time it will fall to the same children's teachers at secondary school to persuade them to dress smartly, and convince them that slobbering around in slippers will not be acceptable in the workplace.

Perhaps it is all part of a cunning plan, the hope being that by the time teenage rebellion sets in, they will all angrily insist on shiny black brogues instead.

A study by Bournemouth University says a casual approach to footwear also reduces bullying. Hmm, forgive my scepticism, but not sure that would work in the Black Country.

Still, it probably hurts a lot less when they kick one another's heads in.

□ □ □

RATIONING is back, well sort of. Due to inclement conditions in southern Europe, Tesco has restricted its customers to a maximum of three iceberg lettuces each.

However will we manage? Now I thought iceberg was a nasty alcohol-free wine which I once bought by accident when I was 17. Can't tell you how impressed my friends waiting outside the off-licence were.

But it appears that a touch of frost in Spain means some of us will have to go a few weeks without flavourless, watery leaves.

And just as everybody felt the need to queue for five hours at Don Miller's when the bakers went on strike in the late 70s – going a couple of days without toast was unthinkable, wasn't it? – you can bet that somewhere there will be reports of people brawling over who has the last salad.

It reminds me a bit of the episode of Open All Hours, when Arkwright found himself lumbered with a job lot of Jamaican ginger cake.

So he limited sales to one loaf per customer, and everyone was clamouring for it.



Lee eventually got the picture he wanted at Mount Olympus



Lee in Latvia, the highest point is 90m less than the Wrekin



Lee seen at the highest point in the gardens at Vatican City

# Roofer Lee hitting the heights across globe

Lee Humpries is on target to reach 100 highest points in countries across the globe.  
HEATHER LARGE reports

**MOUNTAIN climber and intrepid traveller Lee Humpries is a man on a mission as he continues his quest to stand on the highest point in 100 different countries.**

The 34-year-old, from Bilston, is travelling across Europe, Africa, South America and Asia as part of his challenge.

So far he has crossed 40 off his list and scaled Mount Olympus in Cyprus, Har Meron in Israel and Gaizinkalns in Latvia in recent months.

Self-employed roofer Lee has set himself the target of reaching another 20 by the end of 2017 with the aim of getting to 100 by 2019.

His dedication to his challenge was shown in Cyprus where he faced a few hurdles in achieving his goal of climbing Mount Olympus.

## Summit

"I could see the Starbrook wide field telescope on the summit and the RAF Troodos military compound accompanied with several signs showing a camera with a cross through it," he said.

"As with other military compounds, I was aware of the photography issue but it does conflict at times with me taking a photo on the high point or highest legal point.

"I pushed on past two small manned outposts and heading briskly towards the main gates. By this point I had already taken my camera out and took a super fast selfie.

"I went to take another and a heard a man shout 'Oi no photographs' in a very British



Gaizinkalns, which at 312 metres above sea level is the highest point in Latvia

voice. I turned around as my back was to the compound and said no problem and that I was climbing to the highest point in 100 countries, and would take a photo of me and the view not the facility.

"I continued back down the path but I wasn't satisfied. I stopped and thought of

other pictures I had seen showing people closer to the summit.

"I planned to head back up to the top but to the opposite side of the military facility.

"There was a ski slope and another small manned box but this time unoccupied.

"I made my move and quickly jogged to the

fence close to the summit where I had seen the other photos taken."

His recent travels have included a trip to Vatican City in Rome, a place where he had to visit two sites to ensure he was at the highest point – and where he found patience was also key to his success.

"The Vatican lies entirely within Rome and is the world's smallest sovereign state in terms of size and population.

"The highest natural point lies in the Vatican gardens which are only accessible as part of a group tour.

"There is also a discrepancy regarding which is the actual highest point out of two areas within the gardens, so I really needed to go to both.

"There are a lot of variables when on a guided tour that I had no control over and on several occasions nearly decided to quickly slip away from the group as we passed very close to the high points before continuing on.

## Elbrus

"Thankfully the tour guide was thorough and took in the Vatican radio station and other high points, so I was able to take photos."

Among the high points on the agenda for the year are Suur Munamägi, the highest peak in Estonia at 1,043ft, Balanesti in Moldova, which stands at 1,410ft, and the 1,130 ft high hill Hara Dzvarzhynskaya in Belarus.

He is also planning a trip to Mount Elbrus in Russia, Europe's highest peak, as well as Halti in Finland, Fan Si Pan in Vietnam and Halla-San in South Korea.

During his adventures around the world he has had to deal with high temperatures, driving rain and even military gunfire in Croatia when he went to climb Dinara.

He has also visited Kekes in Hungary, Dingli Cliffs in Malta and Mount Titano in San Marino.

To follow Lee's adventures visit [www.100countryhighpoints.com](http://www.100countryhighpoints.com) or follow him on Twitter.

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# Be positive, prepare for a bright new world

I AM getting fed up to the back teeth with the negative attitude of some people about exiting the European Union.

These to me fall in one or more of the following categories – never had a proper job, consumed by dogma or poorly educated.

An example of this is the person who said we had a referendum and chose the wrong option, a definitive statement (dogma), gave no sense of reasoning for the statement! When asked why we should remain it was to protect jobs and business.

Our business has declined, in some

ways, as a result of our membership of the EU. At Longbridge we had a buoyant car company employing large numbers of local workers. This was sold to BMW, a German company, who stripped the assets taking the most successful model. This vehicle is now made in Germany. HP Sauce is now made on the continent, also steel making ceased in Bilston – these are just three examples.

As members of the EU we have to allow all members to tender for contracts to supply goods and services. Are European companies helped by their

Governments? Outside this organisation, we could keep this work at home.

The court case which has just been heard has in fact only put money in lawyers' pockets and achieves nothing, as there was always going to be some discussion about triggering Article 50.

At present we are like a pupa in a chrysalis, to these negative people. I say look forward to breaking out of this into a bright new world where we are free to explore all opportunities that are available to us.

**DOUGLAS WINTERBORN**  
Brierley Hill

## All about money for top clubs

IT seems that even the football experts on BBC television have noticed at last that all the 'big' clubs care about is money!

Alan Shearer is quoted as saying that with all the changes made by Premier League clubs – an average of over seven per team – are cheating fans out of a cup run.

When it's worth about £100 million to each club in the Premier League just to be there it's no surprise. What is a surprise is that it's taken this long for football experts to admit this.

With both BT and Sky seeing falling viewer numbers for their matches this year how much longer will these commercial businesses continue subsidising the Premier League? Only as long as they're making money from it. What then? We'll see if the so-called 'best league' in the world can continue to attract some of the best players.

**M GOUGH**  
Wombourne

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

Dudley Chronicle,  
Chronicle Editorial,  
51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at

### EMAIL

dudley.chron@  
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## Sort out parking in Roseville

I DO as I always do every day at 11.45, I go into Roseville, Colesey, to get our daily needs, as I always favour using local shopping amenities.

On Tuesday there shouldn't be a problem parking. Much to my surprise not a parking space to be had. I went around again hoping there may be a gap somewhere – "NO". I ended up taking a chance on parking by the library on double yellow lines as many others had done, yes it is wrong, yes it is illegal, what else am I supposed to do?

I have health problems and when I did my shopping I was stunned as to where these people are shopping! It most certainly is not in Roseville. The culprits are those who do not wish to pay parking charges at Colesey station. Is it not about time that those who have been notified on numerous occasions take some action? Wake up Dudley Council!

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# Still getting kick out of Subbuteo



Box of tricks – keeping the tiny players safely packed away



Stephen Davis, of Cannock, with Wolves fan Simon Davies

**TODAY'S** top football stars earn hundreds and thousands of pounds a week for their silky tricks and flicks.

But flicking of a different kind rose to the fore when a Subbuteo table football competition was held in the Black Country.

You might have thought Subbuteo was a thing of the past after disappearing from the shelves decades ago. But everyone's favourite 'flick-to-kick' table top football game is making a dramatic comeback across the globe.

The footballing tricks and flicks of old favourite can still draw a crowd, reports TOM OAKLEY

And in the Black Country, the Wolverhampton Subbuteo Football Club (WSFC) is launching itself, almost 20 years after the Black Country and Wolverhampton Table Football Club called full-time in 1999.

Recently 14 football flicking fanatics from as far as Sheffield met at the Pendeford Community Hub in Whitburn Close for the club's first tournament and the first such

event in Wolverhampton for more than five years. The first memorial Roy Holden Subbuteo Tournament is aptly named in memory of the man who ran the original club until 1999. He died back in 2011.

Among those taking was 13-year-old Joseph Kinrade, from Sheffield, who represents England at the game. He travels across Europe to compete.

Justin Scott, 43, from Pendeford, is the man behind the WSFC. He stopped playing in the late '90s but got back into the game after a nasty injury in the 'real game' meant he had to hang up his boots.

## Friend

He said: "I used to play in the mid 80s and got to a good standard as Midland Youth number two and won a National team event in Leicester. In July last year, I saw a picture on Facebook of an old friend playing Subbuteo and 'liked' the post.

"Less than two minutes later, he'd got in contact and asked me over for a game. We've been playing at people's houses since but things have grown quickly and we have formed the Wolverhampton Subbuteo Football Club."

The competition started off as a league before the best teams battled it out in the knockout stages.

At the end of the tournament, its first winner was Robert Ramsey, of



Total concentration from teenager Joseph Kinrade



Up close – West Bromwich Albion fan Rob Ramsay from Quarry Bank

Brierley Hill, and runners up were Mike Bradbury, from Willenhall, and Stephen Davies in third, from Hednesford.

Justin added: "Roy Holden was the organiser of the Black Country and Wolverhampton Table Football Club from 1965 to 1999.

"Roy was very passionate about Subbuteo and ran his club from a venue in Colliery Road in Eastfield which is where I began playing in the 80s.

"He was a very, very good player with a whole string of titles to his name. Roy was very well thought of in the Subbuteo community, so it seemed fitting to start off the new club by holding a tournament in his honour. I was very pleased that his daughters Samantha and Joanne were able to come along and present the trophies."

The club was at The Poynings in Regis Road, Tettenhall, from 7-9pm. It will meet up at that time and venue on a weekly basis.

Justin wants both experienced and new players to join from across the Black Country, regardless of ability, gender, age or skill. Full training will be provided to turn beginners into potential professionals.

He added: The great thing about Subbuteo is that you can get a set for under £30, which is cheaper than your average computer game nowadays. It is very collectible too, with virtually any team worldwide represented in the iconic plastic figures.

Anyone interested can go to Facebook @wolverhamptonsubbuteofootballclub or email wolverhamptonstc@gmail.com

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# Holocaust hero to be honoured with statue

A STATUE of a man dubbed the 'Stourbridge Schindler' could be erected in a park in the town.

Frank Foley risked his life on numerous occasions to save Jews in Hitler's Germany when he was a British intelligence officer in 1930s Berlin.

Council chiefs are planning a £40,000 memorial for the hero and say 'the ideal site' would be in Mary Stevens Park, close to his former home in Eveson Road and the cemetery where he is buried.

A council document states: "Ian Austin MP, and Margot James MP, who have been key figures in the campaign for a Foley statue, feel that the statue should ideally be informal, a seated figure on a bench so that local people and visitors can sit beside him.

## Garden

"An ideal site would therefore seem to be within Mary Stevens Park, for example on a suitably modified bench within the newly created 'tea garden', a location that would also provide good security for a valuable bronze statue."

Major Foley used his position working undercover as a passport control officer to help Jews escape from Nazi Germany. He entered concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and presented visas to the camp authorities so that Jews could be freed.

After the Second World War, he retired to Stourbridge where he lived at Eveson Road in Norton until his death in 1958. He was accorded the status Righteous Amongst the Nations by Israel in 1999, and awarded British Hero of the Holocaust posthumously in 2010. In 2004 a plaque was erected in his honour at the British Embassy in Berlin, and last year a tree and plaque were unveiled in Mary Stevens Park.



Frank Foley – defied the Nazis and saved Jewish lives in Germany

## Recycling is way off target

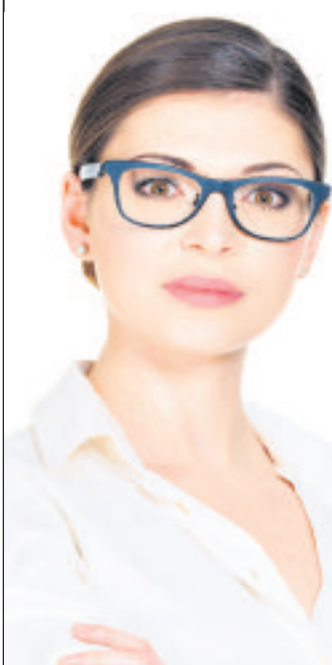
RECYCLING rates in the Black Country are well below the target set by the Government for three years' time, with Dudley the worst.

Figures have been published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, showing the amount of waste reused or recycled in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton in 2015-16. They reveal Dudley at the bottom of the list in the Black Country with just 38.5 per cent of household waste recycled.

In Dudley borough, households left 394 kg of waste for collection per person each year. But that's way off the Government target of half of all household waste recycling being recycled by 2020. It is a worry for Dudley Council, which could be punished with fines if the target is not met.

Councillor Hilary Bills said: "Those who do recycle in the borough do so really well. But we need to get the message out and put incentives to get other people recycling."

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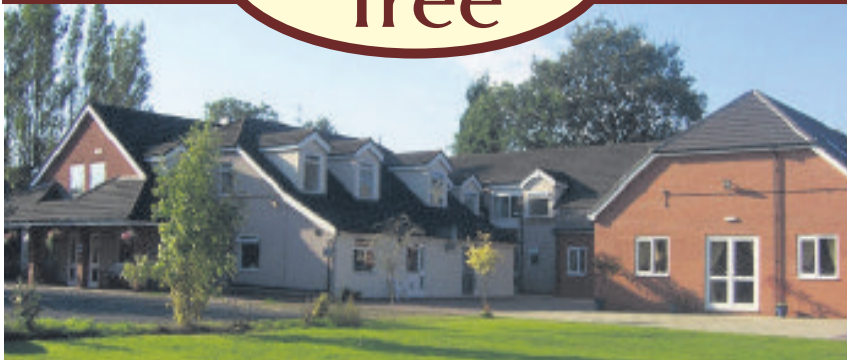
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It has the hottest names on the high street and independent boutiques. All the bridal party will be entertained with live music, food tastings, shopping hotspots and DIY classes, not to mention The Champagne Bar!

And the organisers have teamed up with the Chronicle series to put 30 pairs of tickets up for grabs for the show at Birmingham's NEC from March 3-5.

The Revlon Runway brings to life the latest trends for the bride, groom, mother-of-the-bride and the bridesmaids on the UK's largest bridal catwalk.

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The National Wedding Show tours the country to bring brides-to-be their fashion-fix and the latest in stationery, honeymoons, beauty, plus so much more. It's the perfect place to shop for your entire wedding or if you are on a 'quest for the dress' head to the Bridal Boutique and Designer Boutique, to try on that dream dress and get advice.

The National Wedding show has a line-up of industry insiders to devour their passions at The Makeover Theatre, the home for hair, beauty and style advice.

Savile Row tailors from Cad & The Dandy and Yardsman lead the way for the boys and there is advice on accessories and even the honeymoon.



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## We're s-hopping mad over dumped trolleys

THESE shopping trolleys are clearly not where they belong.

Dozens of them have ended up blighting a nature reserve, posing a risk to wildlife, having been dumped.

But thanks to Alan Preece, the senior warden at the Saltwells Nature Reserve in Brierley Hill, and a hardy band of volunteers, they have been pulled out out brooks, hedges and ditches around the beauty spot.

Around 30 trolleys were rounded up during a clean-up operation.

They are thought to have been dumped by shoppers from the nearby Merry Hill shopping centre with many ending up clogging brooks and streams on the site.

Mr Preece said: "There was a lot more than usual over Christmas. We collect them up, put them in a central location and arrange for them to be collected."

"When you walk around a nature reserve you don't come to see shopping trolleys," Mr Preece said.

"If there is a build up in the brooks it could cause the water levels to rise and all the plants and burrows would be flooded. They form a grid and leaves stick to it, effectively forming a dam."

It is thought many of the trolleys are used to transport heavy goods and then discarded no longer needed. As well as being a nuisance for visitors to the beauty spot, the trolleys also pose a danger to the wildlife who call Saltwells their home.

Mr Preece added: "I am sure Merry Hill are doing what they can. People are stealing them from the shops and dumping them."

The clean-up was part of a wider project to improve the nature reserve.



**Alan Preece, senior warden for Saltwells Nature Reserve, with the trolleys recovered at the beauty spot**

# 1,000 driving tests delayed six months

MORE than 1,000 driving tests were cancelled due to examiner sickness, annual leave or bad weather in just six months, new figures reveal.

Examiners taking holidays meant some learners from the Black Country and Birmingham were forced to re-arrange tests after booking them. Dozens more tests have been called off due to examiners being off sick or for other medical reasons such as appointments.

Latest figures show a total of 1,100 HGV and car driving tests were postponed during the period at centres at Cannock, Featherstone, Birmingham Kingstanding, Lichfield, Lower Gornal, Stafford, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton between April 1 and September 30, 2016.

In total, 564 tests were postponed at Birmingham Kingstanding, which is often used by learner drivers from Sandwell, and 166 at Featherstone. At Wolverhampton 105 were called off while 101 were cancelled at Wednesbury and 73 at Lower Gornal.

During the six month period, 5,447 tests were conducted at Kingstanding, 4,634 at Wolverhampton, 4,462 at Lower Gornal.

# Boss says the 'Trump effect' will help firms

**WEST Midlands firms can reap 'huge benefits' from the boost to the world economy since Donald Trump's election, according to a business leader.**

Ninder Johal, of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said the 'Trump effect', which has seen an upturn in US financial markets, could lead to a period of growth for firms in the West Midlands.

It comes after the Bank of England said the UK had already seen a rise in business confidence since the US President took office.

Mr Johal said: "I think there is a general belief that Britain may be moving from the back of the queue to the front of the queue under President Trump's administration."

"His comments suggest he is going to be a lot more accommodating to us than Obama was."

"The dollar has strengthened and we have seen an uplift in stock market confidence.

## Positive

"If he pushes through his plans for infrastructure it can see good things ahead for the world economy.

"There are a lot of businesses in the Black Country and across the wider region that can see huge benefits as a result.

"There were a lot of positive messages for businesses coming out of Theresa May's recent visit to the White House

"The question now is whether Mr Trump carries out his pledges and does not adopt an insular policy that

By Peter Madeley

is to the detriment of world trade.”

Last week the Bank of England sharply increased its 2017 growth forecast for the second time in four months.

It expects the economy to grow two per cent this year, up from a November forecast of 1.4 per cent, itself an upgrade from the 0.8 per cent forecast made in August.

Since he took office Mr Trump has promised to cut taxes and boost US infrastructure spending.

The Bank's deputy governor for monetary policy, Ben Broadbent, said: "Financial markets have taken a relatively optimistic view so far. You've seen business confidence rise, particularly in the US, you've seen financial markets get more optimistic and I think that has had some impact on us."

Mr Broadbent added: "There are other things the US administration has said that people may worry more

about. There's a lot we have yet to see about the detailed plans, so we'll have to wait and see."

## Helping children read is a rewarding role

A CHARITY in the Black Country which helps to get children reading is looking to double the number of youngsters it supports.

Beanstalk currently has 100 volunteers who hold sessions with more than 300 school pupils but is on the lookout for extra help.

In the West Midlands, it's estimated that there are 8,000 pupils below the expected standards for reading and writing. As well as reading, volunteers play educational games and help children improve their conversational skills during one-to-one sessions at schools.

Michelle Searle of Beanstalk, said: "We have vacancies for helpers in Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Our volunteers feel such satisfaction when they see the children they support, grow and develop with their support."

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# Wonderful land for a great musical escape

## REVIEW

by Diane Davies

**Wonderland**  
New Alexandra Theatre  
Birmingham

'I DON'T want to live in the real world!' Well we have all had days like that but poor Alice has had her car nicked, lost her job and her toe-rag ex is getting married again.

No wonder she decides to go chasing after a giant talking white rabbit with her daughter Ellie and some bloke from downstairs! They find themselves in Wonderland and Alice is convinced she doesn't want to return to the real world ever again.

The production, which recently debuted in Edinburgh, offers a contemporary take on the Lewis Carroll classic with the play starting at the foot of a tower block before plunging down the rabbit hole.

The magic dust is quickly sprinkled on in the second half however when the fairytale story starts to emerge.

### Colourful

Meanwhile the first half is saved by the colourful characters and an extremely strong cast.

From the funky caterpillar, played by Kayi Ushe, to the 'very important rabbit' played by stage veteran Dave Willetts, and the mesmerising performance from the scene-stealing young actress Naomi Morris as Ellie – the cast are captivating. This Frank Wildhorn musical, however, is largely about girl power. About two women who go through the Looking Glass to find their true selves – and return transformed in entirely different ways.

The Mad Hatter, played by Natalie McQueen, is egged on by Ellie to go through the Looking Glass to find her mettle and challenge the Queen of Hearts. Unfortunately the lunacy that follows is far more disturbing.



Kerry Ellis as Alice and Stephen Webb as Jack in Wonderland

McQueen is hilarious as both the original Mad Hatter and the still bonkers but slightly tyrannical transformed character. She is physically comical and her delivery wonderful. She shines particularly in the second half with her edgy number I Will Prevail and in a powerful duet with Alice in This is Who I Am.

Likewise, it is in the second half that Kerry Ellis, as Alice, really excels. Ellis is a seasoned West End star with an award-winning performance as Elphaba in Wicked. She is utterly convincing as the downtrodden single mother Alice evoking some real empathy from the audience.

The love interest is Jack, the bloke downstairs, played by Stephen Webb who also brings some humour to the show. But top billing goes to Wendi Peters, alias Cilla Battersby-Brown in Coronation Street, who plays the Queen of Hearts. She is perfect for the role and boy can she hold a note, but it would be nice to see her on stage a little more.

The better numbers come in the second half and the singers' performances were excellent. This is an uplifting, fun show, so if you need to escape from the real world for a couple of hours – head to Wonderland. Runs at the New Alexandra Theatre until Saturday.

# This is a shoo-in to enchant ballet fans

## REVIEW

by Leon Burakowski

**The Red Shoes**  
Birmingham Hippodrome

THE story of The Red Shoes with its passion, romance and dance-obsessed heroine, is a perfect match for Matthew Bourne, the choreographer who has done more than any other to enliven the British dance scene over the past 28 years.

His modern ballets, such as the male-dominated Swan Lake, The Car Man, Edward Scissorhands and revamps of Sleeping Beauty and the Nutcracker have been genuinely popular art bringing large audiences back to watch dance.

His new production arrived in Birmingham this week after much acclaim in London. The praise is deserved thanks to a ravishing show that captures the Technicolor glow of Powell and Pressburger's classic 1948 movie, whilst also having the rakish hallmarks of a New Adventures production.

### Obsession

The story was derived from a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale about a girl whose obsession with a pair of red shoes sees her condemned to dance in them until she dies. But like the movie that starred Moira Shearer and Anton Walbrook, it has been updated to the mid-20th century, when a talented and beautiful young English dancer is torn between a tormented young composer and an aloof Russian ballet impresario.

It uses a clever technique of placing a proscenium arch on stage, so it pivots to give us front and backstage views of dancers, in performance in snippets of famous ballets and sometimes going mechanically through their paces whilst puffing on a cigarette.

Paule Constable's dramatic lighting gives a filmic quality whilst Lez Broth-



The lovers dance in a scene from Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes

erton's 1940s costumes are a fashion parade of retro gorgeousness.

Bourne's routines have his compelling blend of elegance and carnality.

Highlights include a starlit stroll on a Monte Carlo promenade that turns into a passionate assignation between our doe-eyed heroine Victoria Shaw and her lover Julian Craster, as portrayed by stunning Australian dancer Ashley Shaw and the powerful Chris Trenfield.

There are also delightful beach ball larks on a Cote D'Azur beach and a comic music hall sand dance in the style of lanky pharaohs of fun Wilson and Keppel.

The ballet within the ballet, The Red Shoes continues in Birmingham until Saturday.

# Trump pie to make Tipton great again

A LANDMARK Black Country pub is mixing politics and pastry with its latest creation inspired by America's new President.

The Donald Trump Pie is proving a hit with the publicat Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory in Tipton.

The £9.99 dish is filled with Mexican chilli and surrounded by a wall of nachos and topped with melted cheese. It sold out within three days at the pub on Hurst Lane.

Inspired by landlord Pete Towler's visit to America, staff are now making a new batch to keep up with demand.

Head chef Dawn Pitts and assistant head chef Alex Taylor came up with the recipe, a cheeky nod at the President's dispute with Mexico.

Mr Taylor said: "The customers were all surprised with the satirical pie but it's been extremely popular and we sold out in three days. Once Pete messaged us to say he wanted to do a Trump pie we instantly thought of a Mexican chilli pie as we've done it before and with the whole Mexico wall controversy we thought it was quite fitting."

The pub also has plans for a Brexit pie in March when Britain will be the process of leaving the EU. The two chefs are keeping tight-lipped about the recipe.



Chef Alex Taylor from Gornal with the popular Donald Trump pie, which rapidly sold out at The Pie Factory in Tipton

# Staff fury over losing free car park pass

ANGRY staff are in dispute with Dudley Council over proposed plans to make them pay for parking, among several changes to their terms and conditions of employment.

Council workers have contacted their trade union over proposals which could affect 280 employees.

In December it was announced that councillors could take a cut in their allowances as the local authority continues to look for new ways to make £25 million of savings, which bosses say have been imposed on them by reduced Government funding.

The plans also include three days of unpaid annual over the Christmas period.

Proposals to reduce the mileage allowance from 55p to 45p per mile have also been discussed. More than £8m was paid in mileage in the last five years.

Negotiations with the Unite union are ongoing following the proposed changes to terms and conditions.

**Pay**

Brian Rickers, Unite regional officer, said: "The trade unions are currently in dispute with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, which is making a concerted attempt to attack our members' terms and conditions by slashing mileage allowances and ceasing funding for staff car parking passes.

"This will mean that staff will be required to pay for parking at council-owned car parks. Many staff need their cars to get to work and, therefore, need spaces to park. In many cases, employees use their vehicles

**By Lucy Thompson**

on council business during their working day.

"We are not going to stand idly by while the council bosses salami-slice our members' employment conditions. Council workers have received minimal pay raises in recent years and, at a time when inflation is picking up because of the slump in the value of the pound due to the Brexit referendum result, their living standards in real terms have been eroded."

Leader of the Labour-run authority, Councillor Pete Lowe, said he would cut his own allowance by 10 per cent while other councillors would lose five per cent.

Councillor John Martin, cabinet member for corporate transformation, said: "As negotiations with the trades unions are still ongoing it would be inappropriate to comment at this stage."

Unite was due to hold a consultative ballot of its 170 council members with the result due yesterday (Wednesday). The council is due to make a decision on February 27.

# Driver taken to hospital

A WOMAN had to be taken to hospital for chest pains after a crash in the Black Country. Her silver BMW hit a traffic light on the junction of Lower High Street and Foxoak Street in Cradley Heath last Thursday (February 2) at 7.30pm. A firefighter said the woman motorist, who was able to get out of her vehicle, was taken to Russells Hall Hospital because of pain, possibly caused by the seatbelt.

# More than 100 new nurse helpers have gone into training

MORE than 100 old-style auxiliary nurses will be trained to work across the Black Country and Staffordshire when a course is launched this month.

The group, who will study at the University of Wolverhampton, are among the first wave of trainees in the UK following the Government's announcement a year ago that it was creating a new nursing support role.

To be known as 'nursing associates', they will work alongside healthcare support workers and qualified nurses focusing on patient care. The move is part of a wider plan to diversify and expand the NHS workforce.

The role aims to bridge the gap between healthcare workers and registered nurses, enabling nurses to spend more time on clinical duties and take more of a lead in decisions about patient care.

Eleven test areas were chosen by Health Education England to deliver the first wave of training with The University of Wolverhampton's bid the only one in the West Midlands.

## Partnership

Led by Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, the partnership with the university covers an area including Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and West Birmingham, Walsall and Staffordshire. The candidates were drawn from across the same areas.

A second batch of trainees will start a course in April. Students will be given experience in a range of healthcare settings over two years as they work towards a Foundation Degree (Sci) Nursing Associate.

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# Charity support vital for family hit by cancer

**A 23-year-old mother is battling a rare form of cancer.**

Grace Nkounkou-Issombe found out about her illness just weeks after she and husband Ambrose Ogbechie, of Crossgate Road, Dudley, welcomed their first child, Austin, into the world in May.

In July a biopsy on a lump on her right femur, previously diagnosed as benign, was identified as the result of the rare bone cancer, osteosarcoma.

Treatment started immediately at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. Grace said: "The cancer didn't shock me but the thought I might not be around for my son, well, that really hurt me deeply. It made me feel so low."

"Since then my husband has had to be the mum really as I've been in hospital a lot with the treatment and infections, as the chemo I'm having is intense. I miss Austin so much when I can't see him. I was in intensive care but I'm not ready to die."

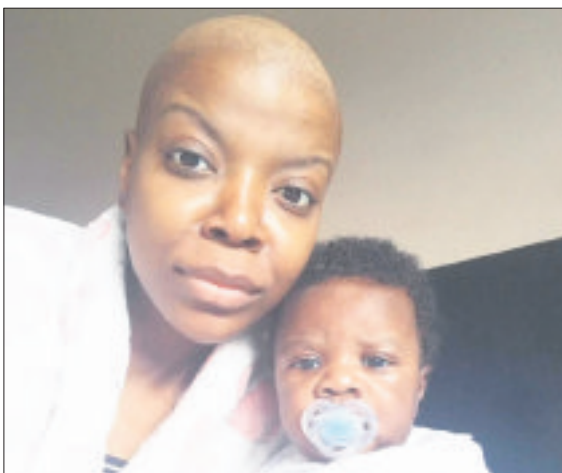
## Worried

In December, alongside doctors, Grace made the difficult decision to have her leg amputated.

Grace and her family has received help from UK cancer charity CLIC Sargent. The Dudley mother is calling for people to support the CLIC Sargent charity to raise money for other patients and their families.

Grace added: "When I met my CLIC Sargent social worker Sam I had no idea who he was. When he introduced himself as a social worker I felt really funny about it. Sam listened to the things I was most worried about, like paying our rent. Ambrose had to give up work to care for Austin and we were really struggling with money. But Sam knew everything about benefits."

For more information visit [www.clicsargent.org.uk](http://www.clicsargent.org.uk) website.



Grace Nkounkou-Issombe, with son Austin, says she's not ready to die

## Free cricket scheme arrives

CHILDREN aged eight to 16 can learn cricket skills and develop a passion for the sport thanks to a national programme that is coming to Dudley Leisure Centre.

The Wicketz project has been set up to help young people who live in areas where it may be difficult to access cricket facilities.

The Dudley Council-run venue on Wellington Road will host the free sessions, which are being delivered with Worcestershire Cricket Board,

on Mondays from 5pm to 6pm for boys and girls of all abilities.

Councillor Khursid Ahmed, cabinet member for leisure, said: "Sport has the power to transform lives in many ways because it not only helps people to keep fit but also unites communities. Over 2,200 children have now engaged with cricket because of this fantastic programme and I'm delighted to see it starting up here in Dudley."

For details call (01384) 812800 or go to [www.dudley.gov.uk/sport](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/sport) website.

NHS



## Don't ignore the warning signs.

If you've been suffering from tummy troubles such as **diarrhoea, bloating, discomfort or anything else that just doesn't feel right for three weeks or more**, it could be a sign of cancer.

It's probably nothing serious, but finding cancer early makes it more treatable, so **tell your doctor.**

**BE CLEAR ON CANCER**

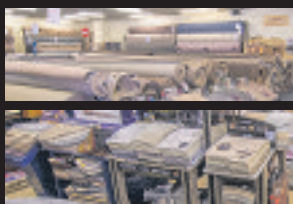
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The quality self catering accommodation is in fully-equipped and centrally-heated log cabins. Guests can enjoy the small, peaceful and secluded park, set in 20 acres of land, including the bluebell filled woodland of about three acres.

Most lodges have private garden areas offering seclusion and privacy as well as the attractive panoramic view towards the magnificent Elan Valley, with its mountains, lakes and moors.

The park is just outside the market town of Rhayader and midway between the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia and Aberystwyth and Hereford.

## Secure

Owner John said: "All lodges face south and have five-mile panoramic views across the valley. We are very dog friendly with secure fences right around the whole park. Most of our lodges have private hot tubs and we are open 365 days of the year."

"We offer romantic short breaks for couples, family holidays and welcome group bookings too."

"The quality of our lodges and the stunning views really are second to none," he added.

Our guests satisfaction comes first in everything we do. Many of our guests not only come back each year but many will visit several times a year."

Oakwood was first opened for guests in 1997 but was purchased by the current owners in April 2013. They spent the



Chill out on this relaxing site and with panoramic views

previous 11 years running a large and successful four-star bed and breakfast in Henley-on-Thames.

Since being at Oakwood, they have added three new premium lodges taking the total up to 14, 10 of which now have private hot tubs, which have proven particularly popular.

The owners, together with their live-in staff, have also re-surfaced the roads while a new guest reception was built and new signage erected on the lanes leading to the site. John added: "The objective was to

continue to offer a quiet, relaxing holiday, that was pet friendly and to welcome all guests whether they are a couple, family or group."

"Being open 365 days a year and allowing check ins on any day of the week, with only a three-night minimum stay, means that Oakwood has a dedicated following of regular guests who return time and time again."

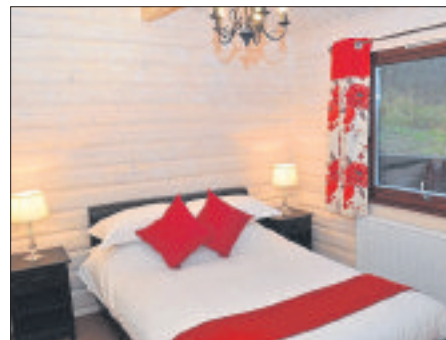
"The plans for the future include a couple more hot tubs, and perhaps one or two more lodges, but above all to retain the

quiet, friendly and relaxing atmosphere that Oakwood has built its reputation on," he added.

More details on the lodges at Oakwood Lodge Park can be found on the website at [www.oakwoodlodges.co.uk](http://www.oakwoodlodges.co.uk) or by calling 01597 811422.

Alternatively, contact Oakwood for details via email on [info@oakwoodlodges.co.uk](mailto:info@oakwoodlodges.co.uk).

They are also on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/OakwoodLodgePark](https://www.facebook.com/OakwoodLodgePark) where a host of pictures and videos of the park can be found.



Interior views of the high standard lodges

## CONTACT US

**Name: Oakwood Lodge Park**

**Address: Oakwood Lodge Park,**

**Rhayader, Powys, LD6 5NT**

**Phone number: 01597 811422**

**Website: [www.oakwoodlodges.co.uk](http://www.oakwoodlodges.co.uk)**

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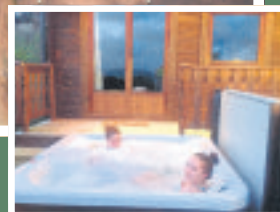
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# MOTORING

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17  
Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, February 9, 2017

**NEW REG  
SPECIAL**



COMMERCIAL SPOTLIGHT ON WHAT'S AVAILABLE FOR NEW REG INCLUDING:



MG GS



VAUXHALL



SUZUKI

# Eager to please and great value

By Ian Donaldson

**Pulling over to the kerb to ask directions (no map, no idea where we were) the helpful granny knew the way.**

She also spotted the new MG GS we were sitting in on the first drive of the company's first fresh model for years.

And, she confidently told grandson, aged about eight, that yes, 'it was a new sort of MG.'

Well done gran. If an MG – long since built in China but designed in Birmingham still – is as easily recognised as this there might be a demand for more than the modest 1,000 the company hopes to sell here in a full year.

Two obvious factors will be instrumental in any sales success for the GS, latest entry in the SUV market where buyers clamour for something that looks tough and a bit off-roady but costs no more to run than a boring family hatch.

First possible sales clincher is the cost; with three versions of the GS priced at £14,995 (Explore), £17,495 (Excite) and £19,495 (Exclusive) with an automatic version of the latter at £20,995.

Each grade is several thousand pounds less than any obvious rival, named by MG as cars like the Honda CR-V, Kia Sportage and Nissan Qashqai. That's an excellent start, as long as the MG GS does not disappoint on things like quality and the way it drives.

It doesn't disappoint on value for money. Even the entry level Explore has cruise control, alloy wheels and air conditioning, while the Excite adds DAB radio, Bluetooth and rear parking sensors.

No satellite navigation though, which is



The GS is tidy all over and especially assertive at the back

why we were lost. For that you need the top grade Exclusive which also piles on leather upholstery with electric adjustment for the front seats, bigger wheels, xenon headlights and auto dimming interior mirror.

Every MG GS is powered by the same 1.5 litre petrol engine, with 164bhp and enough for a 118mph top speed and 0-62mph in 9.6 seconds, and driving through the front wheels only.

There is no likelihood of a diesel (not offered on any GS, anywhere) but MG does sell a 2.0 litre petrol and a 4x4 version in other markets, so they would be available here if there was demand.

A brisk run on roads from rural to M40 produced a respectable 36.2mpg on the trip computer, not a figure likely to deter anyone who fancies a GS.

Another attraction to potential buyers might be the GS's five year/80,000 mile warranty. That will also apply to the next new MG, a smaller SUV due here in autumn next year but is not being applied to the current MG 3 or MG 6 models, which keep their three years/60,000 warranties.

All these details help make a case for the car but you can't imagine anyone buying an MG GS unless it looked the part – stylish is utterly vital in such a fashion-led part of the car market.

Well, to these eyes, MG has done a decent job on the looks front. Neat and tidy all over and especially assertive from the back, the GS will hold its head high in any supermarket car park or outside the kids' school at collection time.

Inside, everything stays neat and tidy but

MG GS, FROM £14,995



MG has done a decent job on the looks front

you can more easily see where the money has been saved to keep the cost so keen. Lots of hard plastics and switches and dials that look a generation older than those you'll find in the dearer opposition.

But the GS fights back strongly when you get it out on the road, where it's quickly obvious the car was honed on British surfaces by engineers who know we like a responsive

feel to our daily transport, but not at the cost of a bone hard ride.

Indeed, the MG GS feels eager to please in the way of an enthusiastic and smaller hatchback. It made me smile and actually enjoy the extra miles our lack of direction imposed before gran guided us to lunch.

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# Buy now at Black Country dealers

There's no better time to be visiting the Black Country Dealers to buy your new Vauxhall. They have some great offers on the boil, especially with the new Mokka X and the Corsa Limited Edition. And, you save on the new car tax increases due on April 1.

Stourbridge Motor House, T Wall, Halesowen Motor House and Dudley Motor Company, collectively known as the Black Country Dealers are part of a family-run business that has been trading in the West Midlands for over 65 years.

The group has invested heavily over the last two years, totally refurbishing their showrooms, service and waiting areas.

Andy Cooper, retail operator for the sites is extremely pleased with the improvements. "Having building work on the site isn't the best situation," he said. "But the staff are rising to the challenges. As the saying goes, 'no pain, no gain' and the showrooms all look fantastic, now the work is completed."

Vauxhall is happy too, as the investment ensures the company match the approved standards set by the manufacturer.

Now's the time to visit one of their showrooms, because as of April 1, all new vehicles sold will attract a £140 standard flat rate annual tax levy while cars that have a list price of over £40,000 will be charged even more. This is a change that will increase the tax bill on many new car models. The thinking is based on the carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions of the vehicle. But over say, a three-year period, you will be paying hundreds of pounds extra on your tax bill.

So, if a new car is on your shopping list for this year, then act now. By buying in February



There's a great deal on the Mokka X

or March instead of April, you can save up to £380 on some of the most popular cars on the market.

Additionally, Black Country Dealers have a great offer on the Mokka X. With just a deposit of £99 you can be driving one of these fantastic compact SUVs for just £199 per month.

Or if one of Vauxhall's Corsas is more to your liking, then take a look at the £159 deposit, £159 per month offer that Black Country Dealers have, with a guaranteed part exchange of £1,000 for your current vehicle.

The full details of these offers and the terms and conditions that apply, as well as the range of savings across other models at their showroom are on their website: blackcountryvauxhall.co.uk or give them a call to talk through your options.

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You can get a Corsa for a £159 deposit, £159 monthly payments and a guaranteed £1,000 part exchange for your current vehicle

and used vehicles, as well as an outstanding aftersales service ensures loyal customers keep coming back time and time again. The company has competitive service rates, to keep your Vauxhall vehicles running smoothly and efficiently. You can take out a service plan from as little as £12.99 a month.

Customers can also benefit from an on hand, fully trained Vauxhall Motability team at each site, with years of expertise to confidently advise buyers in choosing a car that best suits their needs.

As the saying goes, 'he who hesitates is lost'. Hesitate until April to buy your new car

at Black Country Dealers and that loss will be measured in pounds, shillings and pence!

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# NU 17 REG

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# Alto's a tight little bundle of character

By Matt Kimberley

Take the Alto platform, improve the rear suspension, give it much more space and lift the driving position and you'll end up with something a lot like the Celerio. But hold your horses because the new small Suzuki is worth a good deal more than the sum of its parts.

What's with the name, you ask? Well, we're told it hints at a celestial river of stars in the sky.

Obviously. Either way, the Celerio replaces both the Alto and the Splash.

It's just about wider than it is tall, but thanks to the new, more advanced rear suspension it's much more stable than it might be. The roof height allows a raised set of seats, and higher seats mean more legroom – and that's the key to the Celerio's image. It's a practical five-seat car, not a feather boa-wearing flounder.

It's certainly not as pretty as the new Renault Twingo, for example, and it doesn't have the mature air of the Volkswagen Up, but its inoffensive styling hides a tight little bundle of character.

The boot is the biggest in the class; two litres bigger than the Hyundai i10's even though the Hyundai is 6cm longer overall. It's nice and evenly shaped, too; not too deep or at all hard to access.

Four adults will wonder what witchcraft is at work, but the fact is that four average-height men can slot into the Celerio with no problem. Three children can fit across the rear bench at a squeeze, but many of the little Suzuki's rivals can't seat five at all.

There are two engines; a standard 1.0-litre



It's just about wider than it is tall

that has no trouble hustling the mere 835kg car along if you keep it above 3,000rpm, or an upgraded unit with a whisker more torque that should be a little stronger at low revs. This SZ4-spec car is powered by the former.

The composure in the chassis is pretty impressive, but what's even more so is the ride quality, which for a sub-£9,000 car riding on 14-inch alloy wheels is brilliant – testament to Suzuki's insistence on testing prototypes on UK roads.

The interior, while it makes a good first impression, feels increasingly dated the longer you sit in it.

But it's by no means the worst in class and just check out the level of equipment you get as standard: Bluetooth, air conditioning, DAB radio, remote central locking, a trip computer and MPG meter, USB and 12-volt sockets... the list goes on.

Then check out the super-tight turning circle.



Four average-height men can slot in. Three children can fit in the rear, but many of the little Suzuki's rivals can't seat five at all.

You'll be laughing all the way to the high street when you park nimbly in gaps that other cars have to give up on.

Arguably, if you can stomach the manually-adjustable door mirrors and their unpainted housings, the £7,999 SZ3 model is the real bargain.

It shares most of the SZ4's mighty kit list for a £1,000 saving. That's also a huge chunk less

than an equivalently-equipped competitor can cost.

Buyers are likely to be sensible types who know that what they need is more important than what they might want. City cars like the Fiat 500 and Smart ForFour have the Celerio beaten for style, but the Suzuki can hold its head high in the knowledge that it's just about the most spacious, most practical city car

out there with a wedge of its own character to boot.

This car summed up in a single word: Overachiever.

If this car was a...: Hollywood film character it would be Rocky: always the underdog but more than capable of fighting its corner.

● Halesowen Motorhouse, Dudley Road, Halesowen. Tel: 0121 5030001

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## HALESOWEN MOTOR HOUSE

Dudley Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3NH, **0121 503 0001**

Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the Suzuki Celerio range mpg (litres/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): Urban 55.3-68.9 (5.3-4.1), Extra Urban 76.3-83.0 (3.7-3.4), Combined 65.7-78.4 (4.3-3.6), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 99-84 g/km and for the Suzuki Swift range mpg (litres/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): Urban 41.5-57.6 (6.8-4.9), Extra Urban 57.6-72.4 (4.9-3.9), Combined 50.4-65.7 (5.6-4.3), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 128-99 g/km and for the Suzuki Vitara range mpg (litres/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): Urban 42.1-61.4 (6.7-4.6), Extra Urban 55.4-76.3 (5.1-3.7), Combined 49.5-70.6 (5.7-4.0), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 131-106 g/km and for the Suzuki Swift Sport range mpg (litres/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): Urban 33.6-33.6 (8.4-8.4), Extra Urban 54.3-54.3 (5.2-5.2), Combined 44.1-44.1 (6.4-6.4), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 147-147 g/km.

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. For full details contact your local participating Suzuki Dealer. Offer subject to availability for vehicles privately registered between 1st January to 31st March 2017 from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. All prices and specifications correct at time of going to print. \*\*SZ4 models only. Model(s) shown \*Celerio 1.0 SZ2 available at £6,999 on the road (Metallic paint available at £465). Celerio range - Celerio 1.0 SZ2 Petrol Manual available at £6,999 to Celerio 1.0 SZ4 Petrol AGS available at £10,199. \*Swift 1.2 3dr SZ2 available at £9,249 on the road (Metallic paint available at £485). Swift range - Swift 1.2 SZ2 3dr Petrol Manual available at £9,249 to Swift 1.2 SZ4 5dr Petrol Dualjet available at £13,099. \*Swift Sport 1.6 3dr available at £14,649 on the road. Swift Sport range - Swift Sport 1.6 3dr Petrol Manual available at £14,649 to Swift Sport 1.6 5dr Petrol Manual available at £15,149. \*Vitara 1.6 SZ4 available at £14,999 on the road. (Single-tone metallic paint available at £500, dual-tone paint is available at £800.) Vitara SZ4 1.6 Petrol Manual available at £14,999 to Vitara SZ5 1.6 DDIS ALLGRIP TCSS with Rugged Pack available at £24,649.



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**If you're planning to buy a new car this year, don't wait too long. Delay could cost you hundreds of pounds in extra tax!**

This is something that the folks at the Brindley Garages Group are fully aware of and want to make sure you avoid. They know that come April 1, the rules regarding Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) or car tax as it's usually known, are changing, and to the detriment of most new car drivers.

According to the gov.uk website, "in the new system most motorists will be paying an annual VED payment of £140." Although zero-emission cars continue to remain free of tax, the government are replacing the current Standard Rate sliding scale so that nearly all drivers will have to find the money to pay this new annual £140 tax bill.

These changes mean that even buyers of Britain's most affordable cars will now find an increase in their car tax bill. Popular models such as the Vauxhall Astra and the Nissan Qashqai that at the moment have exemptions or very low duties will now pay more. And cars that have a list price of over £40,000 will attract additional charges. Now is the time to act!

Brindley Garages is one of the largest family owned car dealership groups in the West Midlands. They have dealerships in Cannock, Wolverhampton, Tipton and West Bromwich. They have a fantastic legacy of 85 years of superb customer service and high quality products – a heritage they are rightly proud of.



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So, you could soon be driving the all-new Kia Rio with its stylishly revamped, sculptured look and range of improved specifications. Or, the new Nissan Micra, now in its fifth incarnation and which is described by Nissan to be "designed and engineered to break away from convention," a great choice.

Or possibly, the Hyundai i10, the small 5-door city that is in the same segment as the Micra; sophisticated, stylish and yet deceptively simple in design, a wonderful motor to look over. And Honda have refined and restyled their long serving car of distinction the Civic to keep it very much a great choice for the modern motorist.

All of these and so many others are available at one of the Brindley Garage Group showrooms. They can advise you on the funding option that best suits you, such as personal contract purchase or a hire purchase plan, and tailor an individual package to suit your specific needs.

The unique Brindley experience doesn't end at driving away in your new vehicle. They have a comprehensive aftersales service including MOT's, servicing, parts and accessories. And for business users, they have a dedicated fleet department. For those in receipt of disability allowance, they also have dedicated Motability specialists at each of our dealerships.

As well as new cars and commercial vehicles, they stock of over 600 used cars throughout their dealerships. Every vehicle undergoes a multi-point check on arrival and all come with a first-class peace of mind warranty.

Remember though, if you're in the market for a new car this year, buy your car now and the new rules won't apply. Make sure you're not April Fool this year and visit the nearest Brindley Garages showroom ASAP.

Visit the Brindley Garage Group website: [www.brindley.co.uk](http://www.brindley.co.uk) for your nearest showroom and full contact details. Details of the vehicles they have on offer can be found there also.

# Fiesta ST Line is refresh of the Zetec

By James Parker

**Ford's Zetec S trim level has been replaced by the sporty-looking ST Line. We went to find out whether the car's appeal has increased as a result.**

Less than you might think. This is the Fiesta we all know and love, and though the Ford dealer may tell you that ST-Line is an all-new trim level, the truth is that this is actually just a rebadged Zetec S.

Okay, that may be over-simplifying things a tad – the ST-Line's arrival has prompted a little bit of a refresh – but it isn't far off.

So what do you get for your (not inconsiderable) £15,795 outlay? Well, Ford will tell you that the deal-clincher is the ST-inspired bodykit, but you also get flashy alloys, lowered sports suspension and the Fiesta's excellent 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol engine. Oh, and there's a handful of ST-Line badges thrown in, too.

The current Fiesta may effectively be eight years old now, but it still looks as fresh as a daisy. The gaping grille, sharp lines and perfect proportions have seen it top the UK sales charts month in, month out, and it shows no signs of stopping.

This ST-Line version certainly isn't about to damage that record. The full-blown ST looks fantastic, and this less powerful version gets some well-judged trimmings inspired by that 180bhp flagship. The suspension, which drops the ride height by 10mm, gives it a squat and sporty stance that's supplemented by the boy-racer grille, skirts and spoiler, but it's never too over the top. It isn't brash or vulgar, just a really smartly styled machine.

If there is a sticking point, it will be the interior, which looks like someone fired a blunderbuss full of buttons at the dashboard. Everywhere you look there's a button, apart from the tiny little infotainment screen at the top, and the cabin plastics all look a bit old and out-moded. Of course, this isn't a flaw specific to the ST-Line car, but you would have hoped that Ford could have sorted it all out a few years ago.

The ST-Line trim mostly adds aesthetic tweaks, rather than practical ones, so the normal Fiesta's dimensions have been retained. That means you've got plenty of room in the front, but rear passengers will feel a tad cramped. It's fine for children back there, but the lack of headroom means adults probably wouldn't want to sit there for long. Further back, the boot's 290-litre volume puts it marginally ahead of its key rival, the VW Polo, but it still trails behind the likes of the Skoda Fabia and Honda Jazz.

One of the main reasons for the Fiesta's success has been the way it drives, and the ST-Line car is no different. The lowered sports suspension does make it slightly firmer than a bog-standard Fiesta, but it doesn't get really jiggly unless you're going fast on a rough road. More importantly, though, the lower ride makes the car more responsive in the corners and less prone to body roll thanks to the lower centre of gravity.

With the 123bhp version of the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine providing the power, our test car also proved perky enough to raise a smile without being scarily rapid. Like the Zetec S before it, the ST-Line really is a pint-sized barrel of non-threatening fun.

FORD FIESTA ZETEC ST LINE, FROM £15,795



**The current Fiesta may effectively be eight years old now, but it still looks as fresh as a daisy**

ST-Line prices start from just under £15,800, and for that you get three doors and a 99bhp version of the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine that's nippier than it sounds. Standard kit includes 17-inch alloys, a 4.2-inch infotainment screen and a heated windscreen, plus all the aforementioned ST-Line accoutrements.

A more tempting proposition may well be the 123bhp version of the little EcoBoost engine found in our test car. It's only a £500

option and it cuts the 0-62mph time from 11.2 seconds to 9.4. It transforms the car from a smart-looking runabout to a genuine warm hatch. There's a 138bhp EcoBoost, too, but that's £300 more expensive than the 123bhp engine and only shaves a few tenths of a second from the 0-62mph time.

All the EcoBoost engines are relatively economical, with even the most powerful managing 62.8mpg on the combined

cycle, but if you want something even more parsimonious, you can always have the 1.5-litre diesel engine. With 94bhp on tap, it's the slowest engine of the four, but the 11.7-second sprint to 62mph is respectable and the 78.5mpg economy is very attractive. The biggest catch is the £1,100 premium it commands over the 99bhp EcoBoost.

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Ford EcoSport Titanium 1.0 EcoBoost 125PS: urban 42.8 (6.6), extra urban 60.1 (4.7), combined 52.3 (5.4). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emission 125g/km.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

\*To qualify for the additional £500 Customer Saving off the OTR price of a new Ford vehicle (excluding KA+, Mustang and Focus RS) you must arrange to test drive a new Ford vehicle. Test Drive must take place between 1st February and 28th February 2017. Offer available to Retail, Privilege, Ambassador and Eligible Fleet customers only. Vehicles for Retail, Privilege, Ambassador customers must be contracted and registered by 28th February 2017. Vehicles for Eligible Fleet customers must be contracted and registered by 5th March 2017. Promotion at the participating dealership you arranged the test drive with. The £500 Customer Saving is in addition to all other existing promotions. For more information on the April road tax increase visit www.ford.co.uk/vehicle-excite-duty

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Ford Focus ST-Line 1.0 EcoBoost 125PS: urban 49.6 (5.7), extra urban 68.9 (4.1), combined 60.1 (4.7). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emission 108g/km.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

Retail only. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Freeport Ford Credit. Further charges may be made subject to condition of the vehicle. If the vehicle is returned at the end of the finance agreement. Subject to availability at a UK authorised dealer for vehicles contracted between January 1st and February 5th 2017 and registered between January 1st and June 30th 2017.

\*Excludes Ka+ Studio, Fiesta Studio and Style, Focus RS, Mustang and selected Kuga.

**By Ian Donaldson**

A white Toyota Auris is shown from a front-three-quarter view, parked on a dark asphalt road. The car is facing left. The background features a bright sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with a low horizon line. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. The car's license plate is 'HG V9L'. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

It would be no hardship to point the wider looking nose of the new Zafira towards a distant destination, knowing you'd arrive fresh and ready for more.

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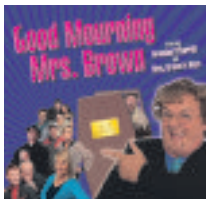


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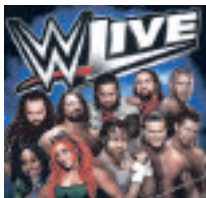
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## Julian Cope



**Sunday, 7pm**  
**Glee Club, Birmingham**  
The stone circle admiring, Tamworth-raised pagan rocker, one of the finest purveyors of post-punk psych pop in the 80s, makes a rare return to Brum. It's already sold out. See [www.lee.co.uk](http://www.lee.co.uk)

## Jack Whitehall



**Thursday, 8pm**  
**Genting Arena, NEC**  
The comedy star of TV's Fresh Meat, Bad Education and numerous panel shows makes the transition to a mega-venue, and is also back on February 26 to play the Barclaycard Arena. Visit [www.gentingarena.co.uk](http://www.gentingarena.co.uk)

## Alpines



**Tuesday, 7pm**  
**Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath**  
Treat your Valentine to some stylish electronic R&B when London duo Catherine Pockson and Bob Matthews (AKA Alpines) bring songs from their second album Another River. See [hareandhoundskingsheath.co.uk](http://hareandhoundskingsheath.co.uk)

## Cinderella



**Wednesday to Saturday (February 25)**  
**Birmingham Hippodrome**  
Birmingham Royal Ballet return home to present David Bintley's spectacular and award-winning family favourite. See [www.birminghamhippodrome.com](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com)

## JAZZ, SOUL, BLUES, REGGAE & MOTOWN

**Up 4 The Downstroke**  
Tonight - tomorrow, The Jam House, Birmingham, B3 1QU. Call 0121 200 3030

**Jazz Tuesdays**  
Tue, Spotted Dog, Digbeth, Birmingham, B12 0NH. Call 0121 772 3822

**Jazzlines presents.. Stella Roberts' Sextet**  
Tue, £14.95 The Jam House, Birmingham, B3 1QU. Call 0121 200 3030

**Big Wolf Band**  
Wed, £14.95 The Jam House, Birmingham, B3 1QU. Call 0121 200 3030

**Dan Spirrett Nott: Of Mice and Men**  
Thu, £6 - £12 Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University, Edgbaston, B3 3HG. Call 0121 331 5901

**Green Bayou feat. Gary Whittingham & Smokin Ade Wakelin**  
Thu, £3 The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ. Call 0121 246 2273

## ROCK & METAL

**The Boss (Springsteen) + Bryan Adams Experience**  
Tonight, £12 - £14 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

**Cult Fiction + Iron 2 Maiden double header**  
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**Dire Streets**  
Tomorrow, £15 Huntingdon Hall, Crowngate Shopping Centre, Worcester, WR1 3LD. Call 01905 611427

**The Modfathers**  
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**Oaceis + The Jam DRC + The Coopers**  
Tomorrow, £7 - £8 The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ. Call 0121 246 2273

**Strange Bones + Blackwaters + special guests**  
Tomorrow, £6 The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 1DR. Call 01782 214991

**Valentines Rock n Roll Dance -1950s featuring Debra-June & The Rockin Tunes, plus top DJ Big Col**  
Tomorrow, The Austin Sports & Social Club, Birmingham, B31 2SF. Call 0121 475 1641

**Altered Bridge + Mallen**  
Sun, £6 The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ. Call 0121 246 2273

**Julian Cope**  
Sun, 7pm Glee Club Birmingham, The Arcadian Centre, B5 4TD. Call 0121 693 2248

**Colin Blunstone with his full band**  
Wed, £16 - £17.50 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

**Rumours of Fleetwood Mac**  
Wed, £22.50 - £32.50 Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT. Call 01743 281281

**Four Year Strong**  
Thu, O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

## POP

**Voice of the Heart – Karen Carpenter tribute**  
Tomorrow, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, TF9 3AX. Call 01630 654444

**Alpines**  
Tue, 7pm Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0121 444 2081

**Let There Be Love Valentines Day Event**  
Tue, The Chameleon Restaurant & Bar, Birmingham, B1 1BD. Call 0121 643 2233

## FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

**The Furrow Collective**  
Sun, MAC Theatre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B3 1QU. Call 0121 200 3030

**Barbara Dickson**  
Tue, £20 - £27 Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT. Call 01743 281281

**Wille & The Bandits**  
Thu, £10 - £12 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

## CLASSICAL

**SOT Festival – BBC Philharmonic Feb 2017**  
Tonight, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD. Call 0844 871 7649

**Steven Osborne: Rachmaninov**  
Wed - Thu, CBSO Centre, Birmingham, B1 2LF. Call 0121 616 6500

## THEATRE

**Stand By Me**  
Tonight, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 1AP. Call 0844 871 7649

**Wonderland**  
Tonight - tomorrow, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

**Dial M for Murder**  
Tonight - tomorrow, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham, B27 7RY. Call 0121 707 1874

**The Red Shoes**  
Tonight - tomorrow, Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

**What's In A Name?**  
Tonight - tomorrow, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Library of Birmingham, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

**Ursula**  
Tomorrow, £6 - £8 The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TT. all 0121 414 4117

**The Nutcracker**  
Sun, £13.50 - £39 Malvern Theatres, WR14 3HB. Call 01684 892277

**Thoroughly Modern Millie**  
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**Frankenstein**  
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**Jamie Raven Live**  
Tue, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 1AP. Call 0844 871 7649

**Anita And Me**  
Tue - Thu, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 42 92 12

**William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (Abridged)**  
Tue - Wed, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Library of Birmingham, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

**Swan Lake**  
Wed, £11.50 - £36.50 Malvern Theatres, WR14 3HB. Call 01684 892277

**Cinderella**  
Wed-Thu, Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

**Carmen**  
Thu, Malvern Theatres, WR14 3HB. Call 01684 892277

## COMEDY

**Standup comedy – James Redmond, David Whitney, Sean Percival**  
Tonight - Sun, £15 Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham, B1 2HG. Call 08700 111 960

**Jimmy Carr: The Best Of, Ultimate, Gold, Greatest Hits Tour**  
Tomorrow, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD. Call 0844 871 7649

**Jack Whitehall**  
Thu, Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

**RH Comedy Presents**  
Thu, The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ. Call 0121 246 2273

## ARTS & CULTURE

**Spotlight Tour**  
Today, Sun, Free Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 248 0708

**Stitch Social**  
Today, Creative Coffee Hub, Birmingham, B29 6HJ. Call 01215 727300

**Theatre Tour**  
Tomorrow, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

**Musical Portraits**  
Tomorrow, Ruddock Performing Arts Centre, King Edward's School, Birmingham, B15 2UA. Call 0121 472 9585

**Beginners Machine Embroidery with Angie Hughes**  
Tomorrow, Winterbourne House and Garden, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TT. Call 0121 414 4117

**David Cox and his Contemporaries**  
Today - Thu, Worcester City Art Gallery, WR1 1DT. Call 01905 25371

**Darwin Memorial Lecture**  
Sun, £10 Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT. Call 01743 281281

**Whyley Dance**  
Tue, Areley Kings Village Hall, Areley Common, Astley Cross, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0NB. Call 07939 318973

**Bite-sized talk: David Cox Influence and Influences**  
Tue, Worcester City Art Gallery, WR1 1DT. Call 01905 25371

**Solihull Photographic Society – Tessa Mills**  
Tue, Solihull Women's Institute, B91 3DQ. Call 07815 165438

**Somewhere Never Travelled – Annette Pugh Solo Exhibition**  
Today - Thu, Reuben Colley Fine Art, Birmingham, B3 2BB. Call 0121 236 0920

**Beginners Embroidery Course**  
Wed, Creative Coffee Hub, Birmingham, B29 6HJ. Call 01215 727300

**Photographic Prize 2017**  
Thu, RBSA Gallery, Birmingham, B3 1SA. Call 0121 236 4353

## FAMILY & KIDS

**Parent and toddler morning**  
Tue, £2 Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 248 0708

## MISC. EVENTS

**Rugby Ramble**  
Tomorrow, Birmingham Moseley Rugby Club, Billesley Common, B13 0PT. Call 0121 443 3631

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

# Dancer Joanne takes the lead in 20s musical

**A GOLD-DIGGING flapper gets more than she bargained for in the new re-vamped version of Thoroughly Modern Millie, a hit musical from the 60s that was set in the 20s and is coming to Birmingham.**

This delirious comic celebration of the jazz age has star power with the professional winner of Strictly Come Dancing's glitterball, Joanne Clifton, making her leading role debut as the bobbed and bewildered Millie Dillmount, a Kansas girl adrift in New York City.

Searching for a rich husband amid the speakeasies and skyscrapers, Millie falls on hard times and finds herself in a low-rent hotel run by the villainous Mrs Meers, being played with relish by former EastEnders Michelle Collins.

## Tap

The winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical, Thoroughly Modern Millie is based on the 1967 Academy Award-winning film (which starred Julie Andrews) with new songs by Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlan. It was a Broadway smash when it opened in 2002, and was followed by a West End production starring Amanda Holden.

Highlights include explosive tap dance numbers and a 'Fred and Ginger' style routine on a window ledge.

The show runs at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to the following Saturday.

For tickets see [www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com) or call the box office on 0844 871 3011.



From Strictly to the roaring 20s, glitterball winner Joanne Clifton stars as Thoroughly Modern Millie in Birmingham



# Growing up in the 1970s

**CORONATION Street and Dinnerladies actress Shobna Gulati is starring in Anita and Me, a culture-clash comedy with its roots in Staffordshire village life.**

The play was a huge success when staged at Birmingham Rep in 2015 and a new production by the Touring Consortium Theatre Company is staged at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Tuesday to the following Saturday.

Shobna Gulati (pictured left) will play Daljit in the new tour of the play adapted by Tanika Gupta from the book by Wolverhampton-born actress, author and comedienne Meera Syal.

The semi-autobiographical tale draws upon Meera's own childhood in Essington, and tells the story of Meena, the only girl from a Punjabi family growing up in a West Midlands mining village during the 1970s, and her friendship with Anita.

Meera Syal, a former Queen Mary's High School pupil who found fame on TV's Goodness Gracious Me, said: "I'm delighted that Anita and Me is touring the UK."

"It is amazing to think of so many people engaging in this story, particularly young people, who like me as a child, may be wondering how they fit in."

## Admired

Oldham-born Shobna was delighted to land a role in Anita and Me. She said: "I've wanted to work on Meera's work for some time. Meera and I seem to have missed each other for one reason or another, but I've admired her work greatly over the years."

"I didn't read the book when it first came out, I don't know why. But it's a great role and it's one that I identify with strongly."

Tickets are on sale from the theatre box office, online at [grandtheatre.co.uk](http://grandtheatre.co.uk) or by calling 01902 429212.

## She's Not There but Colin will be at the Robin

HIS voice features on one of the most spellbinding songs of the 1960s, She's Not There. Now the former lead singer of The Zombies, Colin Blunstone, is bringing its latest band to the Black Country.

The Zombies had another major hit four years later in 1968 with Time Of The Season and that year produced acclaimed album Odessey And Oracle. Blunstone had solo success in the 70s, including the hit Say You Don't Mind, and with Dave Stewart (What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted) and The Alan Parsons Project in the 80s. He's at The Robin 2, Bilston, on Wednesday. For ticket information see [www.therobin.co.uk](http://www.therobin.co.uk) or call 01902 401211.

## Dub rockers promise a Dread good night out

FOUNDED by Big Audio Dynamite drummer Greg Roberts and sound engineer/musician Tim Bran in 1993, Dreadzone went on to become stalwarts of the festival and post-rave dance music scenes with their fusion of dub reggae, electronic dance, folk and rock.

The John Peel favourites even made the UK top 20 singles in 1996 with Little Britain.

This month the band return to their dub roots on eighth album Dread Times, on their Dubwiser label, and will be in concert at The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton on Saturday. Visit [www.wolvescivic.co.uk](http://www.wolvescivic.co.uk) or call 0870 320 7000.

## Hard Rock Hell with 40 bands on the bill

FORGET flowers, how about some very heavy metal for Valentine's Day?

This weekend more than 40 hard rock bands will be gathering at the O2 Academy in Birmingham city centre for two days of metal mayhem.

The weekend festival under the HRH (Hard Rock Hell) Metal banner has been named the St Valentine's Day Metal Melt-down and is marking ten years of HRH.

Bands playing at the venue's three rooms include Skindred, Raging Speedhorn, Evile, Sodom, Lawnmower Deth, Sensor, Obzidian, and Feed The Rhino. See [www.hrhmetal.com](http://www.hrhmetal.com) for the full line-up details and ticket information.

# Short Breaks & Holiday

from only **£79!**

**SHOWTIME** With inclusive admission to top shows & acts in 2017!

## The Lion King London Showtime

Sat 11 March	£149
Sat 30 September	£149

**What's included?**

- Coach travel with reserved seating
- One night bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Free time to enjoy the attractions of London
- Inclusive admission to the matinee performance of The Lion King at the Lyceum Theatre, London. Age 3+

### 2 DAY SHOWTIME BREAKS

Sat 4 Mar	Dreamboats and Petticoats - Live in Manchester	£99
Sat 4 Mar	London & Star Wars Identities at the O2	£99
Sat 4 Mar	Sunny Afternoon & Historic York	£119
Sat 11 Mar	Beautiful - The Carole King Musical - London	£139
Sat 11 Mar	Funny Girl - Live in Liverpool	£119
Thu 16 Mar	Frankly Sinatra Live In Concert	£99
Thu 16 Mar	Oily Murs - Live in Liverpool	£139
Fri 17 Mar	The Magic of Motown & Liverpool	£99
Sat 18 Mar	The Full Monty & Historic York	£99
Mon 20 Mar	Llandudno Grand & Aston and Erin	£209
Sat 25 Mar	Grease - Live in Manchester	£119
Sat 25 Mar	Justin's Party & Blackpool Fun Time	£99
Sat 1 Apr	Bay City Rollers - Les McKeown Live	£99
Wed 5 Apr	The Who Live in Manchester	£159

## NATIONAL SPORTS Sensational Sports Breaks....

### 2/3 DAY SPORT BREAKS

Sat 8 Apr	2 The Grand National - Steeple Chase Enclosure & Liverpool	£119
Thu 13 Apr	2 Betway Premier League Darts - Live!	£99
Sat 15 Apr	2 Liverpool & Haydock Races - Easter Special	£99
Sat 13 May	2 Liverpool & Haydock Races	£99
Sat 13 May	2 Women's FA Cup Final - Wembley	£99
Sat 20 May	2 British Touring Car Championship - Oulton Park	£119
Sat 20 May	2 FA Vase & FA Trophy Finals - Wembley	£99
Sat 27 May	2 Truckfest Spectacular & Oxford	£99
Sat 5 Aug	2 England v South Africa - Old Trafford	£129
Sat 12 Aug	2 Liverpool & Haydock Races	£119
Sat 26 Aug	2 Ebor Stakes - York Racecourse	£99
Sat 2 Sep	2 Burghley Horse Trials	£99
Fri 8 Sep	3 London & The Goodwood Revival	£199
Sat 30 Sep	2 The Official World's Strongest Man Tour Finals	£119

## Liverpool & Chester Races

Sat 27 May	£99	Sat 5 August	£99
Sat 1 July	£99		

**What's included?**

- Coach travel with reserved seating
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Visit to Liverpool
- Inclusive admission to Chester Races.

## Explore Europe Explore the best of Europe....

## Rome & Taste of Italy

Sun 5 March	£319	Sun 2 April	£349
Sun 19 March	£319	Sun 23 April	£349

**What's included?**

- Coach travel with reserved seating
- Four nights dinner, bed & continental breakfast plus two evening meals in Montecarlo Terme
- Overnight stops on outward & return journeys on bed and continental breakfast basis
- Guided tours of Vatican & Innsbruck
- Full day excursion to Florence
- An extended day to Rome
- Excursion to Pisa

### 4/5/7 DAY EUROPEAN BREAKS

Fri 24 Feb	4 Disneyland Paris at the Magic Circus	£349
Fri 24 Feb	4 Disneyland Spectacular at The B&B Hotel	£279
Fri 24 Feb	4 Disneyland Spectacular at The Kyriad	£279
Fri 24 Feb	4 Ostend Weekend Superdeal	£129
Fri 24 Feb	4 Paris Weekend Superdeal	£149
Mon 27 Feb	5 Rhine & Moselle All Inclusive	£199
Mon 27 Feb	5 Rhine Valley Superdeal	£169
Sun 5 Mar	7 Lake Garda & Venice All-Inclusive	£339
Mon 6 Mar	5 Ostend All Inclusive	£239
Mon 6 Mar	4 Ostend Special Breakaway	£139
Mon 6 Mar	5 Ostend Superdeal	£209
Mon 6 Mar	5 Rhine & Moselle All Inclusive	£219
Mon 6 Mar	5 Rhine Valley Superdeal	£189
Mon 6 Mar	5 Three Countries Inclusive Special	£199

## Special Events Enjoy admission to sensational Special Events.

### 2 DAY SPECIAL EVENTS BREAKS

Sat 1 Apr	Victoria at Harewood House	£89
Mon 3 Apr	Flying Scotsman Special	£119
Sat 15 Apr	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
Sat 15 Apr	London & The Tall Ships Regatta Easter Special	£119
Sat 22 Apr	Cotswolds Wartime 1940's Special	£89
Sat 22 Apr	Skipton Market & Harrogate Flower Show	£99
Tue 25 Apr	Gino's Italian Escape - Live!	£99
Sat 6 May	The London Motor Show	£99
Sat 13 May	Abingdon Airshow & Historic Bath	£99
Sat 13 May	Hobbycrafts, Stitch & Sew - Live!	£79
Sat 20 May	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
Sat 27 May	Chelsea Flower Show	£169
Sat 10 Jun	Ideal Home Show & Liverpool	£79
Sat 24 Jun	Victoria at Harewood House	£89

## Emmerdale Studio Experience

Sat 18 March	£99	Wed 17 May	£79
Sat 22 April	£99	Wed 21 June	£79

**What's included?**

- Coach travel with reserved seating throughout
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- All bedrooms with en-suite facilities
- Saturday visit to Skipton for its colourful market.
- Included guided tour of the Emmerdale Studio Experience and enjoy the much loved surroundings of the Dingles, Bernice's Salon, Smith Cottage and The Woolpack

## Family Fun Great breaks for all the family!

## Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice

Sat 15 April	£99	Sat 17 June	£99
Sat 20 May	£99	Sat 29 July	£99

**What's included?**

- Coach travel with reserved seating throughout
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Inclusive admission to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park to visit the Polar Bears and numerous other animals
- Inclusive admission to the stunning 'Deep' in Hull where visitors can enjoy a unique interactive experience.

### 2 DAY FAMILY FUN BREAKS

Sat 18 Mar	Legoland Spectacular	£99
Sat 25 Mar	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 1 Apr	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99
Thu 6 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Thu 13 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 15 Apr	Legoland Spectacular	£119
Sat 15 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 22 Apr	Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor	£99
Sat 29 Apr	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99
Sat 29 Apr	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 20 May	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 27 May	Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor	£99
Sat 3 Jun	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 10 Jun	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99

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**NATIONAL HOLIDAYS**

## CHOICE



Terry Pratchett

**Terry Pratchett: Back in Black (BBC2, 9pm)**

A dramatised documentary telling the story of the life of Terry Pratchett, the fantasy author whose popular Discworld series made him a household name, selling more than 85 million copies worldwide. In 2015, following a prolonged and very public battle with Alzheimers, Terry died, leaving behind one last unfinished story - his own. Here, actor Paul Kaye steps into the celebrated writer's shoes, charting Terry's life from his troubled schooldays and his difficulties securing the respect of literary critics, through to his eventual success, and his gradual decline into ill health. The film makes use of Terry's own words, along with those of his friend and collaborator Neil Gaiman.

## BBC1

**6.00 Breakfast.** **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Nitro Athletics: Usain Bolt Takes on the World. **2.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.30** Film: Shrek 2. (2004) Animated adventure sequel. **3.55** BBC News. **4.05** Regional Programme. **4.15** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Wales v England (Kick-off 4.50pm).

**6.55 Let It Shine.** Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc take the nationwide talent search live, as the five assembled boy-bands discover for the first time what the viewing public really think of them. Having battled through solo auditions and collaborations with some of Britain's biggest musical stars, the would-be pop princes must now stand on their own two feet, performing as five-pieces for the first time. There's a change to the judging panel too, as Dannii Minogue, Martin Kemp and Gary Barlow are joined by a special guest judge to cast their verdict on each band's performance. At the end of the show, lines are opened for viewers at home to vote for their favourite act.

**7.55 Casualty.** Connie is on the warpath as the day of Elle's hearing arrives. However, when Grace is severely injured, her life ends up in Elle's hands.

**8.45 Let It Shine - The Results.** The results of the viewer vote are revealed, and the three top-scoring bands claim a place in the next stage of the contest, while the remaining two battle for survival.

**9.15 Taboo.** Delaney's trading plans begin to unravel, and a shocking family revelation have an impact on not only James himself, but also his erstwhile allies, his household, and his family.

**10.15 BBC News.** Weather; National Lottery Update.

**10.30 Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield.

**11.55 This Country.** New series. Mockumentary presenting a wry look at the lives of young people living in modern, rural Britain, via two ne'er-do-well cousins living in the Cotswolds.

**12.20 Film:** Passion. (2012) **2.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.05** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.30 Film:** Magic Town. (1947) **8.10 Film:** The Lavender Hill Mob. (1951) **9.30** Coast. (R) **10.00** Britain's Secret Seas. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** A Cook Abroad: Tony Singh's India. (R) **1.00** Film: Quo Vadis. (1951) Historical epic, starring Robert Taylor. **3.45** Flog It! (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** Mastermind. (R)

**6.00 University Challenge.** Student quiz, chaired by Jeremy Paxman. (R)

**6.30 Only Connect.** Victoria Coren Mitchell presents the quiz show in which successful contestants make connections between things that initially do not appear to be linked. (R)

**7.00 Welcome to Hull: City of Culture 2017.** Comedienne Lucy Beaumont returns to Hull to preview some of the cultural highlights taking place throughout 2017, with help from actress Maureen Lipman and writer Richard Bean.

**7.30 George III - The Genius of the Mad King.** After 200 years under lock and key, all the personal papers of George III are seeing the light of day for the first time. In this documentary, Robert Hardman uses these documents to shed new light on Britain's longest-reigning king, revealing a man who was a political micromanager and a restless patron of science and the arts, and someone who was driven - sometimes to distraction - by his sense of duty to his family and his country. Featuring readings by Simon Callow and Sam Thomas. (R)

**8.30 Dad's Army.** The platoon competes against a rival unit for the honour of guarding Winston Churchill on a visit to Walmington-on-Sea. Guest starring Barbara Windsor. (R)

**9.00 Terry Pratchett: Back in Black.** Paul Kaye steps into Terry Pratchett's shoes in a dramatised documentary that makes use of the celebrated fantasy author's own unpublished writing to tell his own life story.

**9.50 QI XL.**

**10.35 Film: Behind the Candelabra.** (2013) Biopic of pianist Liberace. Directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Michael Douglas.

**12.30 Film: A Royal Affair.** (2012) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

## ITV

**6.00 CITV:** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.30** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **8.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** Alphabetical. (R) **10.25** Guess This House. (R) **11.25** River Monsters. (R) **11.55** ITV News; Weather. **12.00** Dance Dance Dance. (R) **1.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Italy v Ireland (Kick-off 2.25pm). **4.30** Tipping Point. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather.

**6.00 You've Been Framed! To the Max!** Harry Hill showcases a selection of high-octane comical mishaps, captured on video by viewers.

**7.00 Ninja Warrior UK.** Ben Shepherd, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the penultimate edition of the obstacle-course contest, as competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage.

**8.00 The Voice UK.** Celebrity "coaches" Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Jennifer Hudson and Gavin Rossdale preside over the penultimate round of Blind Auditions. As ever, the celebrity panel must decide whether to lend their support to each act with their backs turned to the performer, allowing only the contestants' voice to play a part in the selection process. If more than one coach wants to claim the same artist, then the contestant is given a chance to choose which coach they would like to join.

**9.20 Through the Keyhole.** Fay Ripley, Steve Jones and Rochelle Humes form the studio panel, as Keith Lemon challenges them to guess which celebrity homes he has invaded this week.

**10.20 ITV News.** Weather.

**10.35 Film: The Bourne Ultimatum.** (2007) The amnesiac assassin regains his memory, just as a CIA director sets in motion a plan to kill him. Spy thriller sequel, starring Matt Damon, Julia Stiles and David Strathairn.

**12.40 Jackpot247.** **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.10** ITV Newscreen.

## CHANNEL 4

**6.20** The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)

**6.30 Channel 4 News.**

**7.00 Penelope Keith's Hidden Villages.** The Welsh peninsula of Pembrokeshire provides the setting for Penelope's last outing, as she tours villages clinging to the cliffsides and estuaries, or nestled beside beaches, farms and castles. She discovers how Manorbier has connections to both Virginia Woolf and CS Lewis's Narnia stories, and pays a visit to the waterside villages of the Cleddau Estuary, from Langwm to Lawrenny. She encounters native Welsh-speakers in the Preseli Hills, and visits St Dogmaels, home of an impressive food market. Last in the series. (R)

**8.00 Great Canal Journeys.** Timothy West and Prunella Scales take a trip to Bristol, where Timothy is soon to play King Lear at the Old Vic, and revisit both their childhood homes in Devon. (R)

**9.00 Film: 2 Guns.** (2013) Two undercover agents - one working for the DEA the other for the Navy - infiltrate a drug cartel, only for the planned sting operation to go disastrously wrong. Both operatives become fugitives and must work together to survive - but both keep their true identity a secret, mistakenly thinking the other is a real criminal. Action adventure, starring Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg.

**11.10 Film: Riddick.** (2013) A fugitive left for dead on a dangerous alien world, Riddick is hunted by the planet in a plot to escape. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel.

**1.15** The Last Leg. (R) **2.10** Hollyoaks.

**4.15** Building the Dream. **5.05** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00 Milkshake!** **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.25** Access. (R) **10.30** Police Interceptors Unleashed. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Benefits: Can't Work. Won't Work. (R) **2.00** Benefits: 19 Kids and Counting the Cost. (R) **3.00** The Nightmarer Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.00** The Nightmarer Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.00** Nightmarer Neighbours. (R) **5.00** Nightmarer Neighbours. (R) **5.00** Nightmarer Neighbours. (R)

**6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Repossession agents Mike Allonby and Trevor Jones travel to Cheshire to collect a vehicle from a woman who owes several hundred pounds on a loan, then they head to Liverpool to recover a Jaguar X-Type. High court enforcement officers Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner carry out an order to evict a couple with young children in London's East End just a few days before Christmas, and later, in Essex, try to track down a man who owes more than £10,000 to his landlord. (R)

**7.00 NCIS: Los Angeles.** Deeks places his job in danger when he shoots and kills an unarmed man, prompting unexpected emotions for Kensi as she contemplates losing her partner.

**8.00 NCIS.** A petty officer is shot dead in a manner matching the modus operandi of the Tri-State Sniper, but said killer is discovered to have been in custody on the day of the shooting.

**8.55 5 News Weekend.**

**9.00 Football on 5: The Championship.** George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Brighton & Hove Albion v Burton Albion at the AMEX Stadium.

**10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush.** George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Charlton Athletic at Cherry Red Records Stadium.

**10.30 World's Biggest Diamond Heist.** The experts try to repeat the breathtaking theft of around \$91million-worth of diamonds from a maximum-security underground vault in 2003.

**11.30 Police Interceptors Unleashed.** (R)

**12.00 SuperCasino.** **3.10** Film: Against All Flags. (1952) **4.40** Access. (R)

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four**  
**7.00** Natural World: Meet the Monkeys  
**8.00** A303: Highway to the Sun **9.00** Treasures of Ancient Egypt **10.00** The Young Montalbano **11.45** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.50** The Joy of Disco **1.50** Bogie Fever: A TOTPD Disco Special **3.20** Sounds of the 70s **3.50** Close

**ITV2**  
**11.15** Ninja Warrior UK **12.15** Take Me Out **1.35** You've Been Framed! **Gold 2.10** Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **3.10** FYI Daily **3.15** Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **4.00** Film: Snow Dogs (2002) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: Snow Dogs (2002) **6.05** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **7.05** FYI Daily **7.10** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **8.00** Scorpion **9.00** Film: Shaun of the Dead (2004) **10.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.30** Release the Hounds: Famous & Freaked **2.25** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

**ITV3**  
**11.40** Film: Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo (1990) **1.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.55** Lewis **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Film: Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.00** Blue Murder **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

**ITV4**  
**11.05** The Professionals **12.05** Storage Wars: Texas **1.05** Storage Wars **1.30** ITV4 Racing: Live from Newbury. Ed Chamberlin presents coverage of six races from Newbury and Warwick. **4.00** Film: Every Which Way But Loose (1978) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** Film: Every Which Way But Loose (1978) **6.10** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix **11.15** Film: Mars Attacks! (1996) **12.15** FYI Daily **1.25** Film: Mars Attacks! (1996) **1.25** The Wine Show **2.30** Sporting Funnies **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

**E4**  
**2.30** The Goldbergs **5.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Bridesmaids (2011) **11.30** Gogglebox **1.40** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.35** The Intebweeners **3.30** Virtually Famous - Tatoo Fixers vs Virtually Famous **4.10** Rude(s) Tube

**Film4**  
**11.00** Genevieve (1953) **1.00** Inkheart (2008) **3.05** ParaNorman (2012) **4.55** Turner & Hooch (1989) **6.55** Volcano (1997) **9.00** Super 8 (2011) **11.15** The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (1986) **1.20** Machete Kills (2013) **3.35** Close

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**SUN 12/02/17 STARMAKERS KARAOKE**

**MON 13/02/17 BENS KARAOKE & DISCO**  
**TUE 14/02/17 PREDATORS KARAOKE**  
**WED 15/02/17 TYLER JON**  
**THUR 16/02/17 STARMAKERS KARAOKE**

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CHOICE



**British Academy Film Awards 2017 (BBC1, 9pm)**  
Stephen Fry hosts the awards ceremony live from the Royal Albert Hall. This year's nominated films include I, Daniel Blake, La La Land, Arrival, Nocturnal Animals and Manchester by the Sea, while Meryl Streep, Amy Adams, Dev Patel, Natalie Portman, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling, Jeff Bridges, Naomie Harris and Michelle Williams are among the actors in the running for awards.

BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Spy in the Wild. (R) **2.15** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Scotland (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme. **6.00** **The Big Painting Challenge.** New series. The nationwide search for Britain's best amateur artist returns, with Mariella Frostrup and the Rev Richard Coles taking over hosting duties. In the first edition, 10 contestants put their still life skills to the test, with some words of advice from Diana All and Pascal Anton. The artists must first paint a table laden with objects, before being split into two groups and challenged to produce a homage to either Van Gogh or Lichtenstein. Judges Lachlan Goudie, Daphne Todd and David Dibosa assess their efforts and decide who should be eliminated from the contest. **7.00** **Countryside.** Reports on the latest rural developments. Including weather for the week ahead. **8.00** **Call the Midwife.** A woman expecting her third child realises she cannot afford to care for her baby, so makes the painful decision to give it away to her wealthy but childless cousin. Shelagh befriends the woman in the next hospital bed while recovering from her miscarriage, and Dr Turner confides in Timothy about his worst fears. Sister Julianne looks for a new recruit to join the midwives, and the community prepares to celebrate the opening of a new park. **9.00** **British Academy Film Awards 2017.** Stephen Fry hosts the awards ceremony live from the Royal Albert Hall. This year's nominated films include I, Daniel Blake, La La Land, Arrival and Manchester by the Sea. **11.00** **BBC News.** **11.20** **Regional Programme.** **11.30** **American High School.** New series. Cameras follow staff and pupils at a majority African-American High School in South Carolina. A new principal tries to improve grades and discipline. **12.10** **The Celebrity Apprentice USA.** **1.35** **Weather for the Week Ahead.** **1.40** **BBC News.**

BBC2

**6.00** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.45** An Island Parish: Anguilla. (R) **8.15** The Edible Garden. (R) **8.45** Countryside. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) **11.45** Nigelissima. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Nitro Athletics: Usain Bolt Takes on the World. **2.00** **Film: The Winslow Boy.** (1999) Edwardian drama, starring Nigel Hawthorne. **3.40** Money for Nothing. (R) **4.10** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Six Sunday. **5.45** **Film: Catch Me If You Can.** (2002) Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks. **8.00** **Dragons' Den.** Panelists Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Touker Suleyman, Sarah Willingham and Nick Jenkins assess the profit-making potential of a brand of wheatgrass tablets, customised earphones, a teacher's online male grooming enterprise, and a range of baby products created by an Irish couple. Presented by Evan Davis. **9.00** **Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week.** The remaining contestants undergo 48 hours of training by a former master sergeant of the US Army's Green Berets. The unit's motto is Leave No Man Behind, and the gruelling challenges they face force the recruits to live up to this code by punishing everyone for the failure of any individual member of the group. **10.00** **Match of the Day 2.** Jason Mohammad reviews the day's Premier League action, which featured Burnley v Chelsea at Turf Moor, and Swansea City v Leicester City at Liberty Stadium. **11.00** **Live at the Apollo.** Gina Yashere introduces surreal Australian comedian Sam Simmons and rising comedy star Ellie Taylor to the stage of London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R) **11.45** **Six Nations Rugby Union.** Highlights from this year's tournament. **12.15** **Film: All Good Things.** (2010) The heir of a wealthy family marries a medical student, but is suspected of murdering her when she disappears without trace. Crime drama, starring Ryan Gosling and Kristen Dunst. **1.50** **Sign Zone: Question Time.** Topical debate from Torquay, chaired by David Dimbleby. (R) **2.50** **Holby City.** A familiar face makes a return under shocking circumstances. (R) **3.50** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC Two. **12.15** **Film: All Good Things.** (2010) The heir of a wealthy family marries a medical student, but is suspected of murdering her when she disappears without trace. Crime drama, starring Ryan Gosling and Kristen Dunst. **1.50** **Sign Zone: Question Time.** Topical debate from Torquay, chaired by David Dimbleby. (R) **2.50** **Holby City.** A familiar face makes a return under shocking circumstances. (R) **3.50** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC Two.

ITV

**6.00** CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Teen Titans Go! (R) **9.05** Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Cino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Chopping Block. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.40** **Film: Murder on the Orient Express.** (1974) Agatha Christie mystery, starring Albert Finney. **3.05** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **3.50** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **4.50** The Voice UK. (R) **6.00** **Regional Programme:** Weather. **6.10** **ITV News:** Weather. **6.30** **Dance Dance Dance.** Alesha Dixon and Will Best host the final of the celebrity dance contest. Just two contestants and their dance partners remain in the running, and they will have to undergo a gruelling rehearsal process before trying to impress judges Ashley Banjo, Tina Landon and Timor Steffens with re-enactments of famous performances by Beyoncé, Lady Gaga and Gene Kelly. Last in the series. **8.00** **Lion Country: Night and Day.** The two prides find their territories overlapping. A lioness gives birth to a litter of cubs, and a lost elephant searching for its family strays into the middle of the conflict. **9.00** **The Good Karma Hospital.** A mysterious man is found washed up on the beach. Ruby gets to grips with her new routine at the hospital, but begins to question Gabriel's professional conduct. **10.00** **ITV News:** Weather. **10.20** **Six Nations Highlights.** Mark Pougatch presents action from the three matches in the second round of this year's championship, featuring Wales v England, Italy v Ireland and France v Scotland. **11.15** **Premiership Rugby Union.** Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the latest top-flight fixtures, including Exeter Chiefs v Wasps, Bath v Northampton Saints and Worcester Warriors v Saracens. **12.15** **Jackpot247.** **3.00** **Chopping Block.** (R) **3.50** **ITV Nightstream.**

CHANNEL 4

**6.15** The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **2.35** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **3.40** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.45** Channel 4 News. **5.15** **Film: Mrs Doubtfire.** (1993) A divorced actor disguises himself as an ageing female Scottish housekeeper to get a job looking after his own children. Comedy, with Robin Williams, Sally Field and Pierce Brosnan. Edited for language. **7.30** **The Jump.** The contestants second challenge is to compete in snowcross, an event that requires them to race downhill on snow skates across a winding course littered with turns, jumps and obstacles. The losers must then face the Jump to determine which of them will be eliminated from the contest. Presented by Davina McCall. **9.00** **McCall.** While Carrie handles her client, Saul's trip takes a dramatic turn, and Quinn investigates. Claire Danes and Rupert Friend star. **10.05** **Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown.** Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the words-and-numbers quiz, as Jon Richardson and David Mitchell take on guest captain Joe Wilkinson and Rosin Conaty. (R) **11.00** **Film: 127 Hours.** (2010) A mountain climber is trapped by a boulder in a remote canyon and reluctantly takes desperate measures to survive. Danny Boyle's fact-based drama, with James Franco and Kate Mara. **12.50** **How to Get Fit Fast.** Presenters Anna Richardson and Amar Latin reveal just what viewers need to do to lose weight, strengthen their bodies and improve fitness levels. (R) **1.40** I Do At 92. Documentary following three pensioner couples set to tie the knot. They include Georgina, a widow who is marrying Raymond, a former chef with terminal cancer. (R) **2.35** Hoarder SOS. De-cluttering experts Curtis Dowling and Joannia Riley come to the aid of a woman in west London whose bedroom is so full of clothes she struggles to get the door open. **3.25** Building the Dream. **4.15** Phil: Secret Agent Down Under. (R)

CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.35** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.20** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.50** Police Interceptors: Unleashed. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.15** Police Interceptors: Smash & Grab. (R) **3.10** **Film: Jackie Chan's The Medallion.** (2003) Comedy adventure, starring Jackie Chan. **5.00** **Film: The Last Airbender.** (2010) Premiere. Fantasy adventure, starring Noah Ringer. **7.00** **Magic Makes You Laugh Out Loud.** Internet videos of magic tricks going horribly wrong, featuring contributions from performers whose routines have become popular online, including a skydiving magician. **7.55** **5 News Weekend.** **8.00** **On Benefits.** New series. Telling the stories of people struggling to live on state welfare. **9.00** **Amy Winehouse: The Last Hours Of.** On July 23, 2011, Amy Winehouse was found dead in the bedroom of her home in Camden, north London, with the coroner concluding she had died of alcohol poisoning. The singer had fought a very long and public battle with addiction, but in the weeks leading up to her death she had apparently made huge progress. Using information from her post-mortem, medical testimony heard at the inquest and eyewitness accounts, forensic physician Dr Jason Payne-James re-examines the circumstances surrounding the singer's death. (R) **10.00** **Most Shocking Moments in Pop 2.** Celebrating outrageous events from the world of pop music, including Grace Jones hitting Russell Harty on his chat show, and George Michael's dubious driving. (R) **1.00** **SuperCasino.** **3.10** **Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh.** (R)

DIGITAL

**BBC Four**  
**7.00** Wagner's Ring Cycle **9.35** James May at the Edge of Space **10.05** The Sky at Night **10.35** The Horizon Guide to Space Shuttles **11.35** British History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley **12.35** Michael Grade's History of the Pantomime Dame **1.35** Len Goodman's Big Band Bonanza **2.35** Horizon: The Core **3.35** Close  
**ITV2**  
**11.40** The Voice UK **1.00** 2Awesome **1.05** 2Awesome: Guidance **1.40** 2Awesome: Fame High **2.00** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.30** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.50** **Film: The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement** (2004) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** **Film: The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement** (2004) **5.10** **Film: The Haunted Mansion** (2003) **6.10** FYI Daily **6.15** **Film: The Haunted Mansion** (2003) **7.00** **Film: Coyote Ugly** (2000) **8.00** FYI Daily **8.05** **Film: Coyote Ugly** (2000) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.30** Ibiza Weekender **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightstream  
**ITV3**  
**2.55** **Film: Carry On Matron** (1972) **3.55** FYI Daily **4.00** **Film: Carry On Matron** (1972) **4.45** Wycliffe **5.55** This Time Next Year **7.00** Midsummer Murders **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.30** Joanna Lumley: The Search for Noah's Ark **12.00** A Touch of Frost **3.35** May the Best House Win **5.20** On the Buses **5.45** ITV3 Nightstream  
**ITV4**  
**11.45** Shed and Buried **12.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. **5.15** Storage Wars **5.40** The Snooker Mavericks **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. **11.15** **Film: Out for Justice** (1991) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20** **Film: Out for Justice** (1991) **1.05** **Film: On Wheels** **2.00** I Want That Car **3.00** Teleshopping  
**E4**  
**2.35** The Jump **4.05** The Big Bang Theory: Bromance **7.00** **Film: Men in Black** (1997) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** **Film: Your Highness** (2011) **12.00** **Tattoo Fixers** **1.05** The Inbetweeners **2.15** Gogglebox **3.10** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD  
**Film4**  
**2.45** Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **4.30** Carry On Spying (1964) **6.15** Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk Interview Special **6.25** Life of Pi (2012) **9.00** Non-Stop (2014) **11.05** Black Mountain Poets (2015) **12.55** Prevenge Interview Special **1.05** Wish You Were Here (1987) **3.00** Close

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## FILM CHOICES

### MONDAY

**The Legend of Hercules, Channel 5, 10pm**  
The son of a Greek God and a mortal queen grows up blessed with superhuman strength. He is betrayed and sold into slavery by his evil stepfather, but he regains his freedom and hones his fighting skills so he can return and reclaim his rightful kingdom.  
Mythological adventure, starring Kellan Lutz. (2014)

### TUESDAY

**Pretty Woman, BBC1, 10.45pm**  
A ruthless millionaire hires a prostitute while on a business trip. Realising she may be useful in helping him keep up a successful appearance, he pays her to accompany him for a week as he associates with the rich and powerful – but falls in love despite their many differences. Romantic comedy, starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. (1990)

### WEDNESDAY

**Killer Collector, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
Two women at an auction unwittingly purchase a storage locker belonging to a serial killer that contains evidence of his crimes. They soon find themselves in a desperate race to uncover the truth before the murderer tracks them down. Thriller, directed by and starring Casper Van Dien. (2015)



Up in the Air, Thursday, BBC1, 11.45pm

### THURSDAY

**Up in the Air, BBC1, 11.45pm**  
A corporate downsizing expert loves his life, detached from everyday existence and striving to achieve a personal goal of 10 million accumulated air miles. However, his lifestyle comes under threat by an up-and-coming executive with a revolutionary approach that would make his role all but obsolete. Comedy drama, starring George Clooney. (2009)

### FRIDAY

**Forbidden Secrets, Channel 5, 3.20pm**  
A divorced woman returns to her family home to begin rebuilding her life, but her stay turns into a nightmare when she has frightening visions of her childhood, during which her mother tried to drown her. Determined to face her fears, she visits the institution where her parent resides, and triggers a series of terrifying events. Thriller, starring Kristy Swanson. (2005)

# Soap legend takes a trip down memory lane

**H**ands up who remembers Dot Cotton's first line in EastEnders.

Probably very few who tuned in on July 4, 1985, thought that the chain-smoking, hypochondriac with an ear for gossip would go on to become a soap legend.

More than 30 years later, she's still going strong, and to fans of the programme, is almost as familiar to them as members of their family.

Dot was not, however, an original cast member; although mentioned in early episodes due to being the mother of 'Nasty' Nick Cotton, she didn't pop up in person until the 40th edition – but from the very beginning, her uniform of 'Italian boy' hairstyle and brown mac were in place, as was the cigarette fixed to her bottom lip.

It's impossible to imagine anybody but June Brown playing her either. She was largely unknown when she was cast, but is now a household name. And, as she celebrates her 90th birthday, the BBC is paying her a deserved tribute via this

documentary which looks back on her life and career.

"June Brown is a one-off, a genuine national treasure," says executive producer Caroline Wright. "It's been a privilege to be given the chance to capture her magic."

Brown was born in Suffolk on February 16, 1927, one of five children, although two of her siblings died in childhood. She was schooled in Ipswich, was evacuated to Wales during the war, and later served with the Wrens before studying at the Old Vic Theatre School.

Like Dot, she has known personal tragedy; her first husband, actor John Garley, suffered from depression and committed suicide in 1957. A year later she wed Dixon of Dock Green regular Robert Arnold, with whom she had six children; sadly, their second daughter was born prematurely and passed away at just 16 days old. She and Arnold were together for 45 years until his death in 2003.

Brown has spent much of her career as a jobbing character actress, working on the stage while popping

up on TV and films such as Psychomania, Sunday Bloody Sunday, The 14 and Lace. Her scenes were cut from the controversial Sam Peckinpah movie Straw Dogs, but she did appear in The Time Warrior, the first Doctor Who story to feature intrepid journalist Sarah Jane Smith, in 1973.

It was Leslie Grantham who recommended her to EastEnders' producers, and initially Dot was a rather unsympathetic, sanctimonious character who, over the years, became warm and sympathetic.

Brown was nominated for a Bafta for her portrayal of her alter ego in 2009 thanks to an incredible performance in a solo episode in which Dot recounts the story of her life on cassette for her husband Jim to listen to in hospital.

Despite her age, the actress is determined to soldier on, and long may she continue to do so.

And those first words? In case you're still wondering, they were: "Give us a tea, Lofy. And a glass of water so I can take a paracetamol!"



June Brown at 90: A Walford Legend, Thursday, BBC1, 8.30pm

# BEST OF THE REST

### MONDAY

**First Dates: Valentine's Special Channel 4, 9pm**

One assumes that the couples for this Valentine's Day special of the perennial favourite First Dates have been chosen well in advance – not only because producers will want to save their most entertaining duos for this most romantic of occasions, but also because it's impossible to book a table at short notice this weekend. Those hoping to be lucky in love tonight include comedian Vince, who's rarely received a Valentine's from anyone other than his mum. But will the poor lamb's luck change when he meets Brigitte Bardot lookalike Anna? Meanwhile, retired councillor Elaine hopes to make up for lost time with twinkle-toed music producer Steve, and a former 'asexual Asian nerd' wants a 'Norse god. Thor blamey!

### TUESDAY

**Super Slimmers: Did They Really Keep the Weight Off? Channel 4, 8pm**

Now January is over, that sudden desire to lose weight after the excesses of Christmases relaxes a little, and it's easy to slip back into bad habits. Around 60 per cent of people in the UK are overweight, so many of us need a little inspiration,

and this documentary provides some of that. Cameras follow six folks who lost 80 stone between them. But what happened when all the fuss died down and the Press photographers left? Did they rubberband back to old habits or did the pounds stay away? Plus, a telly star who lost 17 stone reveals the body's incredible response to dieting that sabotages our efforts to keep weight off. Let's hope there also some advice on how to avoid raiding the fridge during the ad breaks.

### WEDNESDAY

**Who Do You Think You Are? BBC1, 8pm**

Warwick Davis starts his research with his paternal grandmother Edith, who led to his big break at the age of 11 when she heard a radio advert. That advert was 'looking for short people to appear in Return of the Jedi', and Warwick was catapulted to stardom, continuing his acting career in the likes of Labyrinth and Willow. He takes a non-judgemental approach as he researches the family line stretching back from Edith,



Who Do You Think You Are?, Wednesday, BBC1, 8pm

finding humanity and humour in some uncomfortable stories, while on his maternal side, he finds out about a postman who lived a double life.

### THURSDAY

**The Supervet Channel 4, 8pm**

New series. The return of the documentary following the work of Professor Noel Fitzpatrick and his team at their cutting-edge veterinary practice. Their first patient is a young West Highland terrier which has a problem with its paws. Two new bionic feet later, and the poorly pup has a new lease of life. A young husky collie is also brought in after being hit by a car, only for the hip replacement operation to run into trouble, and a lazy dachshund requires double surgery and lots of physiotherapy.

**The Great Pottery Throw Down BBC2, 8pm**

The home potters are challenged to master the art of Japanese-style ceramics. They begin at the wheel, making as many rice bowls as

they can in 15 minutes, before piercing and carving an intricate design into a lantern using a technique known as the 'devil's work'. For the main challenge, they throw a sake set, consisting of one bottle and six identical cups. The exciting part, however, comes during the firing, when they use a risky 16th-century method in which they pull their burning pieces out of the kiln and plunge them into a bin full of combustible materials.

### FRIDAY

**Piers Morgan's Life Stories ITV, 9pm**

While we can be relatively confident that Ewan McGregor won't be appearing on Piers Morgan's flagship interview show any time soon, it is fair to say that the former Mirror editor does have an uncanny knack for getting the biggest names in the worlds of film, TV, music, sport and entertainment to join him in his studio before baring all about their lives. This week's guest is no different: 1980s pop icon Boy George drops in, to talk about his long and illustrious career, and the fascinating life he has led alongside it. From his early childhood with a violent father and suicidal mother, to his global success with Culture Club - and the tensions which existed behind the scenes - it seems no subject is off-limits.

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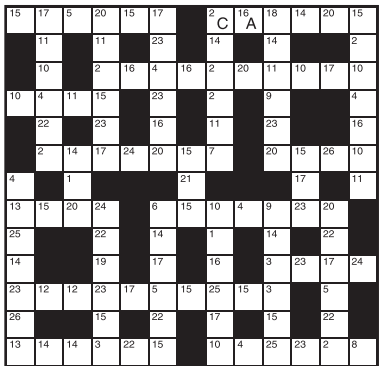
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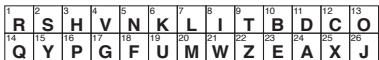
# BRAIN GYM No.415

## Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



## Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

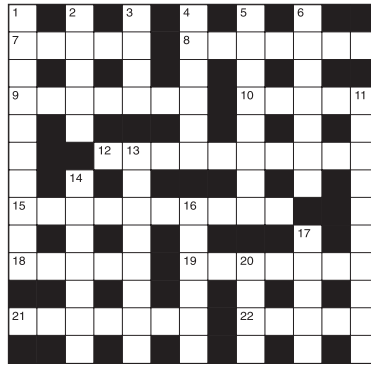
### Cryptic Clues:

#### Across

7. Fastener in the portal at church (5)
8. A room rearranged by us is romantic (7)
- 9 & 2Dn. Spirit apparatus even now not within the law (7,5)
10. It takes place in the seventies (5)
12. How confrontations are arranged (4,2,4)
15. By which a brother is dispatched (10)
18. In 'Faustus' a tangibly evil influence (5)
19. One broken chair in a hundred is antique (7)
21. Locksmiths (7)
22. The first person to follow the gist of the subject (5)

#### Down

1. Obvious quarrels, so they make accusations (10)
2. See 9 Across
3. Showing elegant style - the little bird has no end (4)
4. One of the first toys to cause annoyance (6)
5. It sounds a very short preface! (8)
6. Staff pet? It's far too malodorous (7)
11. Right-handed key (6,4)
13. Was instrumental in fixing the parts (8)
14. Cannons linked with assault (7)
16. Used to convey one in the hunt (6)
17. See 20 Down
- 20 & 17Dn. Chop up food for the sauce and do something grotesque (3,1,5)



### Quick Clues:

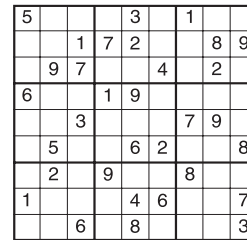
#### Across

7. Nick (5)
8. Infested (7)
9. Anger (7)
10. Anxiety (5)
12. Sparing (10)
15. Equivalent (10)
18. Adhere (5)
19. Defame (7)
21. Expand (7)
22. Regional (5)

#### Down

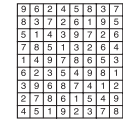
1. Inhibits bacteria (10)
2. Store (5)
3. Avoid (4)
4. Powerful (6)
5. Drover (8)
6. Liberty (7)
11. By merit (10)
13. Boaster (8)
9. Designation; 11. Duffers; 12. Their; 13. Scorch; 15. Writhe; 17. Learn; 18. Easiest; 20. Incorrectly; 22. Ego; 23. Lorgnette. Down: 2. Ice; 3. Eagle; 4. Elapse; 5. Twitter; 6. Contentment; 7. Intersect; 10. Suffocation; 11. Disclosed; 14. Cynical; 16. Terror; 19. Sheen; 21. Let.

## Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >



LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Telegraph; 8 Roe; 9 Latest issue; 11 Platoon; 12 Aware; 13 Safari; 15 Period; 17 Excel; 18 Lullaby; 20 Electric eel; 22 Ear; 23 Easter egg. Down: 2 Era; 3 Gusto; 4 Aliens; 5 Hostage; 6 Prevaricate; 7 Yesterday; 10 Traffickers; 11 Possessed; 14 Relieve; 16 Plates; 19 Loire; 21 Erg. QUICK - Across: 1 Different; 8 Own; 9 Designation; 11 Duffers; 12 Their; 13 Scorch; 15 Writhe; 17 Learn; 18 Easiest; 20 Incorrectly; 22 Ego; 23 Lorgnette. Down: 2 Ice; 3 Eagle; 4 Elapse; 5 Twitter; 6 Contentment; 7 Intersect; 10 Suffocation; 11 Disclosed; 14 Cynical; 16 Terror; 19 Sheen; 21 Let.

## Quiz

1. Who wrote All Quiet on the Western Front?
2. With Wimbledon, which championships form the tennis grand slam?
3. Who translated the New Testament into German in 1522?
4. What is the male hormone called?
5. How many arms does a starfish usually have?
6. In computing, what do the letters AI stand for?
7. Of what is malocclusion a defect?
8. Which TV programme devoted two editions to the business affairs of Terry Venables?
9. What is the official language of the New Caledonia island group?
10. Which George Eliot novel is subtitled A Study of Provincial Life?

### Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Jordan; 2 TS Eliot; 3 Iowa; 4 Speed

of light; 5 John Smith House; 6 Junta;

7 John Cleese; 8 Untouchable; 9 Rowan;

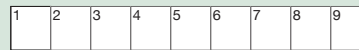
10 Salisbury Plain.

Niner: MASCULINE

## Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

67835 gives a profession,  
459719 gives a second profession,  
257319 gives a third profession.



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Quote: JGRT

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- ✓ 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast at the Chequers Plaza Hotel, Blackpool
- ✓ Entertainment on some nights
- ✓ Afternoon tea dance at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom
- ✓ Heritage train journey on the Settle to Carlisle Railway
- ✓ Optional excursion to the Lake District (£8.99pp)
- ✓ Return coach travel from Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge

**5 Day Break** ~~was £259~~ **now £229**

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- ✓ 2 nights dinner, bed & breakfast at a selected hotel, Home Counties
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- ✓ Return coach travel from Halesowen & Stourbridge

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High life – Hong Kong's cloud-scraping skyline viewed from 428 metres high on Victoria Peak



Emperor Minh Mang's 19th century tomb in Hue



Ho Chi Minh stands tall in front of the colonial Hotel de Ville de Saigon

# Good morning vibrant Vietnam!

**GOOD** night Halong Bay, good morning Hong Kong. Closing the curtains in one country and opening them in another is a special experience.

Particularly when it's your butler who's pulling the curtains and the windows open out to your own private balcony. It's a tough life on a luxury cruise aboard the Silver Shadow.

My voyage began in Ho Chi Minh City – or Saigon, as the locals still call it. Arrive here and you're plunged into a hectic hive of activity. Bikes, heat, fish, bikes, rice, cars, more bikes, beer, dogs, bright lights, more bikes. Vietnam's largest city is a sharp contrast to the calm of a cruise ship.

Docked within a 20-minute walk or five-minute moped ride of Saigon's historic heart, an overnight stay provided just enough time to enjoy the town's excitement. More than 40 years after the scrambled American evacuation, the influence of the war remains strong, but is just one piece in a mesmerising jigsaw of ancient, colonial, communist and contemporary influences.

By Harry Leather

If it wasn't for the ceaseless heat and swarms of bikes, I could have been in a different century and continent around every corner. Leaving was a challenge. But thankfully a healthy dose of wining and dining helped ease the pain.

Even that evening's 'casual' dining at the pool bar and grill was spectacular – prime rib-eye steak and emperor-sized prawns grilled at our table on 400C lava rocks. Other nights included à la carte Italian La Terrazza, in-suite dining and the 400-seater main restaurant. And not once was my wine glass empty.

Some 215 nautical miles later and the curtains were opened in Nha Trang, where the south-east Asian sun burned away the early morning cloud to reveal a high-rise city and sand ringed by a row of green hills.

The lunchtime departure left enough time to see the ancient Cham Towers, mooch and munch grilled lobster on the beach. Here, as ever, the locals did a fine job of competing with the Silver Shadow's classy cookery. But not even the tastiest of pho or freshest

of lobster could compete with the star of the Silversea show – Le Champagne.

The Relais & Châteaux restaurant was the only onboard eatery where a cover charge was needed, but the mushroom cappuccino justified it alone.

Waking in industrial Chan May next morning was less spectacular. But thankfully the eyesore port served as a gateway to some of Vietnam's most historical towns.

I chose Hue and its Imperial City – another location where wildly different sections of Vietnam's modern history interact to make the town what it is today.

A mixture of Chinese-style temples, pagodas and palaces, the Imperial City is where Emperor Minh Mang entertained his hundreds of wives, mistresses and children in the 19th century.

Brutally, only around one in seven of the city's buildings survived the first few months of 1968 – when American forces fought a bloody and costly battle with the North Vietnamese – and the ongoing restoration work served as a reminder of the reconstruction effort needed across the country in the decades since the war.

Next stop Halong Bay. Furry green karst

islands poked through the shimmering blue water, which rippled as the wind broke through the humidity and teamed up with the sun to usher any clouds away.

As the rays shone down and we sailed through the lagoon-like sea, I felt like I was travelling back to a Jurassic world.

Finally we sailed 393 nautical miles to Hong Kong. While others enjoyed a sing-along and a 'British pub lunch', I spent the wet and windy final day at sea in the gym, the hot tub and the spa, before savouring a last six-course feast and a party. A few hours later and eggs benedict in front of the Hong Kong skyline killed any sign of a hangover.

There was just enough time to pop 428 metres up Victoria Peak and enjoy one of Asia's best cityscapes.

\* Silversea's Silver Shadow departs on a 14-day voyage from Hong Kong to Singapore on October 8 2017. The voyage calls at Ha Long Bay; Chan May; Nha Trang; Ho Chi Minh City; Bangkok and Koh Samui before arriving in Singapore. Fares start from £4,550 per person based on double occupancy of the Vista Suite. Visit [www.silversea.com](http://www.silversea.com) or call 0844 251 0837.

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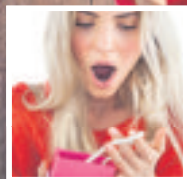
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# Valentine



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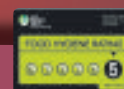
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## Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management



**Bloomfield Street North, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63585 pcm+fees**  
Extremely well presented and surprisingly large end terrace with off road parking. Within walking distance to Halesowen, local bus routes and shops, comprises 2 bedrooms, nice lounge, attractive fitted diner/kitchen with white goods excluding washing machine, utility room, house bathroom with shower, a glorious courtyard garden and gated driveway. EPC: E



**ROWLEY REGIS, Mincing Lane£550 pcm+fees**  
Located within a short drive from local shops, and the M5 J2, is this well presented terraced house, briefly comprising of 3 bedrooms, new fitted kitchen, utility room, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, driveway parking for 2 cars, rear garden, unfurnished. EPC: D



**Powke Lane, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, B65E495 pcm+fees**  
Deceptively large and well worth a viewing. This 1st floor apartment features a good size double bedroom, spacious lounge, large kitchen, huge bathroom with a separate shower cubical, parking to the side of the property and also within walking distance to Blackheath Town Centre. EPC: F



**WOLVERHAMPTON, Rothasay Gardens£475 pcm+fees**  
A modern 1 bedroom 2nd floor apartment with lift access available from 07/03/17. This lovely property features a large lounge, fitted kitchen with gas hob/oven, gas central heating, secure entrance & allocated parking. The property has good access links to Wolverhampton and Birmingham. EPC: D



**Martley Road, Worcester, Worcestershire, W12E410 pcm+fees**  
●●STUDENT LET●● A room with this three bedroom semi detached home, which is gas centrally heated and double glazed (where spec). Being within a short walk from University of Worcester.



**Mincing Lane, Rowley Regis£575 pcm+fees**  
A fully refurbished semi detached house, briefly comprising of: Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front and Rear Gardens, On Road Parking EPC TBC



**Highfield Road, Halesowen £600 pcm+fees**  
3 BEDROOMS for the price of 2! UNDERGOING A RE-DECORATION! A modern semi-detached house in a sought after location. Ideal for shops, bus links to Birmingham, Halesowen and Stourbridge and Coley Lane Primary School. This property features 1 double bedroom and 2 single bedrooms, large lounge, large modern kitchen/diner, bathroom with shower, drive and garage to rear, lovely garden with great views. MINIMUM CONTRACT 12 MONTHS. EPC: D



**Thorns Road, Brierley Hill, Quarry Bank, West Midlands, DY5 £895 pcm+fees**  
A superb extended traditional detached home close to Merry Hill and local train stations. Featuring a large lounge, separate dining room, country style kitchen with range cooker, 3 double bedrooms, walk in shower room, extensive rear garden with ample parking at the rear and driveway to the front. EPC: TBC



**High Farm Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63C695 pcm+fees**  
Spacious & immaculately presented part furnished semi detached house in central Halesowen close to all amenities. Fully fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, large lounge/dining room with sofas and dining table and chairs, French doors to rear garden, 3 good size bedrooms & shower room. EPC: C



**BRIERLEY HILL, Walker Avenue£675 pcm+fees**  
UNDERGOING A REFURBISHMENT! A modern semi-detached house offering spacious family, accommodation comprising of: entrance hallway, large lounge, fitted kitchen, 3 good sized bedrooms, new bathroom with shower, driveway parking & garage. EPC: C



**Hunnington Crescent, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63E560 pcm+fees**  
Recently redecorated and carpeted. This huge 3 bedroom town house has had a full redecoration, carpets and boiler. This house will not stay around for long as its so close to Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring 3 bedrooms, a large lounge with stunning views, bathroom with shower, driveway and garage parking, downstairs wc, small low maintenance rear garden. EPC: D



**HALESOWEN, Newton Court£650 pcm+fees**  
City style penthouse living in Halesowen! A stunning 3 bedroom 1st floor apartment finished to an extremely high standard and offering an incredible amount of flexible living accommodation. Situated within a deluxe development of just 3 luxury apartments. Featuring 2 double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, 1 single bedroom, 2 bathrooms and separate walk-in showers, striking living accommodation and views into the adjacent trees. Secondary washing facilities



**HALESOWEN, Blackberry Lane£625 pcm+fees**  
Not to be missed! A lovely mid terrace in a very popular location close to Town Centre having been newly painted & new carpets upstairs comprising of Lounge, fitted dining kitchen with appliances, 2 bedrooms & a further carpeted loft room accessed by strong & sturdy wooden ladders, refitted bathroom, central heating & double glazing, private rear garden with storage shed, on road parking, available now. EPC: D



**Cobham Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63E595 pcm+fees**  
Well presented 2 double bedroom mid terraced house situated in this popular residential location being in walking distance of Halesowen Town Centre. This property benefits from 2 reception rooms, 1 with dining area & patio doors leading to rear garden, kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 2 double bedrooms, double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: E



**ROWLEY REGIS, The Avenue£595 pcm+fees**  
A fantastic opportunity to rent a new build property in a very convenient location close to train & bus links. This 2 bed semi-detached is finished to an exceptional standard. The property features a spacious lounge with patio doors leading to a low maintenance garden, modern fitted kitchen with cooker/hob, downstairs w.c, 2 double bedrooms, rear garden, driveway parking, double glazing and gas central heating. MINIMUM CONTRACT OF 12 MONTHS. EPC: B



**Copse Road, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands, DY2E595 pcm+fees**  
A semi-detached house that has been fully refurbished to a high standard comprising of: Hallway, front lounge, large kitchen/dining area, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front & rear gardens with driveway & additional parking to rear. Solar panels installed saving up to 30% on electric bills. EPC: D



**Lyndhurst Drive, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 E550 pcm+fees**  
Fantastic size property and a great location for local shops and transport links to Kingswinford, Stourbridge and Wordsley. This wonderfully presented semi-detached house features 2 double bedrooms, large dining kitchen, spacious lounge, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, driveway parking. EPC: D



**Heath Lane, Oldswinford, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 £495 pcm+fees**  
Ideally located in the centre of Oldswinford for shops, transport links and Mary Stevens Park. This large and spacious end terrace house features 3 good size bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, downstairs bathroom, upstairs toilet, fitted kitchen, enclosed rear garden and on road parking. EPC: E



**Stamberrill House, 1 Bagley Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9**  
Fully refurbished apartments within a stones throw of Stourbridge Town Centre and on the number 9 bus route. This stunning 1 bedroom apartment on the ground floor features an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: C



**Stamberrill House, 1 Bagley Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9**  
Fully refurbished apartments within a stones throw of Stourbridge Town Centre and on the number 9 bus route. This stunning 1 bedroom apartment on the 1st floor features an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC



**Warren Close, Tipton, DY4 £395 pcm+fees**  
Fully refurbished apartments within a stones throw of Stourbridge Town Centre and on the number 9 bus route. This stunning 1 bedroom apartment on the 1st floor features an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC

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Road and Bromley Lane.

It has an entrance hall, an impressive large lounge with a dining area, a kitchen with appliances, an inner hall and a guest cloakroom/WC, three bedrooms and a bathroom with a white suite.

It has a block paved driveway and landscaped gardens.

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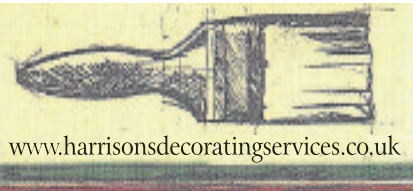
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**MARIE**, very attractive curvy widow, longing for romance, seeking country-loving male with old-fashioned values for lots of TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425959

**CARLY**, 34yrs, attractive and discreet military wife seeks no strings fun with respectable gent. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box 424419

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**ATTRACTIVE** well educated lady, mid 30's, solvent, professional, seeks discreet broad minded gent. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 425891

**SLIM**, smart, young at heart lady, early 70s, 5ft8, likes dining out, reading, gardening, seeks kind, caring gent with GSOH who likes dining out and holidays for companionship and shared interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425791

**KATIE** 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual benefit with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

**SARA**, 43, educated, independent, attractive female, nervous about dating through advertising, so pls don't disappoint me by not replying. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425703

**JANE**, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

**BROWN** eyed female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTm male 67-74 for LTR. Text only. Mailbox: 5501142

**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

**JEAN**, 40, 5ft slim, busty blonde, new to dating and fed up of going through the pub scene, WLTm down to earth male for adult company. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425671

**EMILY**, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

**JACKIE**, 56yrs, attractive lady who lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424491

**ANNABELLE**, sophisticated 28yrs hoping to meet older gent for adult fun, discreet, sincere, genuine advertiser. Text only Mailbox: 4157105

**SUE**, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424781

**ROZ**, 43, tactile, sensual, loves to dress up, and wear heels, seeks genuine, days out and travelling, and looking for a professional gentleman, kind and caring, intellectual and outgoing, with gosh, for friendship possibly more, in the Stafford area. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424569

**MELINDA**, 52yrs, attractive and broad minded seeking chap any age for some fun. Couples also. Text only Mailbox: 4131946

**KATHY** 37, gorgeous mixed race single female, 5ft 8ins, slim, sensual, just looking for kind, trustworthy guy any age, looks or race. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425589

**JOSIE**, sexy black lady, 52yrs seeks adult times with concerning gent, any age, discreet clean, womanly figure. Text only Mailbox: 4028592

**YOUNG** looking Indian female, 40, enjoys meals in/out, good company and conversational, looking for like-minded male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425493

**VIKKI** 32yr old active female, confident, fit, loves night outs, looking for similar assertive male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425453

**SUE**, attractive genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424673

**HELEN**, mid 50's naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424493

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**TRACY**, 41, outgoing sun worshiper, OHAC, employed, looking for her Prince Charming to enjoy romantic holidays and good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425257

**AMANDA**, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425327

**THELMA**, 59, slim, petite and Afro Caribbean, GSOH, trustworthy, honest and very caring, leave me your details if that sounds good to you! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425195

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**EILEEN** mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341

**LINDA**, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, winning dining. Age unimportant. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425337

**LOVING** lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425325

**MARY**, passionate honest slim blue-eyed blonde, 39yrs, likes nights inland, looking for affectionate male, any age to spend adult fun times. Interested? call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425009

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**MARY**, professional mature lady, lovely, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424775

**RETIRE** happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, chess, seeks tall, funny, kind chap, Shropshire. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459

**LYN**, 47, curvy quiet sensitive brunette but with a wild side. It could be exciting to know me! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425013

**MALE**, late 60s, medium build, 5ft10, n/s, car owner, likes meals out, holidays, walks, WLTm slim, attractive female who enjoys similar activities for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425757

**ATTRACTIVE** Shrewsbury male, 50s, WLTm an attractive female, any age/status, for discreet daytime fun and excitement. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422801

**GARY**, 46, blue eyes, GSOH, likes football, quiet nights in, night out, cinema, walking, travelling, looking for a likeable woman, 35-50, bubbly and fun loving with a GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425441

**MATURE** male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283

**PETER**, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a travelling companion. Genuine advertiser. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425343

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**MARRIED** businessman, mid fifties, seeks lady for discreet adult fun. Any age/looks unimportant. Text only. Mailbox: 5530419

**MALE**, 60, tall and slim, WLTm older female of larger build, any age, status, for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425807

**TALL** male, 58, seeks larger woman, any age, for discreet fun, married or single. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425643

**GENUINE** male, 37, friendly and easygoing, enjoys sport and keep fit, WLTm genuine female 25-45, for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420253

**ADVENTUROUS** 36-year-old male, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235

**TALL**, dark, attractive male, 57, WLTm an attractive female for discreet daytime fun, 25-50. Can travel. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425759

**MATURE** male, 70s, tall, retired, recovering alcoholic, WLTm someone understanding, maybe in the same situation for friendship and mutual support. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425263

**YOUNG** looking 63 year old male, GSOH, friendly, considerate, attractive, looking for a naughty female, any age/status, for adult fun and friendship. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425243

**IRISH** gent, 66, GSOH, n/s, wishes to meet lady, North Birmingham area, for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425269

**JAMES**, 59, 5ft11, average build, WLTm a Christian lady, 60-70, for companionship. Hope to hear from you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425227

**IRISH** male, 62, 5ft 9ins, GSOH, independent, seeks genuine female for friendship initially. Birmingham area. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403623

**DAN** 46, easy going chap WLTm a lady 40+ for an uncomplicated discreet friendship with no strings fun. Discretion guaranteed. Text only. Mailbox: 5595608

**WELL** made broad male, 5ft 10ins, medium build, looking for genuine adult fun with lovely sexy lady, possible LTR or friends with benefits. Text only. Mailbox: 5321154

**MATURE** male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283

**CHRISTIAN** male 51, seeking Christian female, 35-45 for friendship, possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423747

**MALCOLM**, 60 something gent, own home and car, GSOH, genuine and kind WLTm sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425335

**PROFESSIONAL** gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425333

**ATTRACTIVE**, tall, dark, professional male, 50, GSOH, easygoing, enjoys sport, socialising, good company, looking to meet attractive female for fun, adventure and take things from there. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425453

**MALE**, 63, widower, Irish, GSOH, tall, independent, seeks special lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409243

**MALE** 65, GSOH, seeks female for friendship and companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418389

**TOM**, 32, slim, attractive, own home, likes to eat out and in, WLTm honest, kind girl for tender, loving care and fun times. No time wasters please. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424929

**JAY**, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303

**CHRIS**, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425345

**YOUNG** 70 widower, fit, lonely, 5ft 11ins, 11st, likes drives, walks, DIY, meals out, gardening, smoker, looking for lady to spend life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424687

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# 8

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**DIESEL**

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**MINI COOPER S**

1.6, 3-dr hatchback, 2008 reg.

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MoT May 2017.

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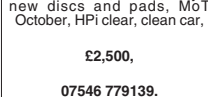
### THIS COULD BE YOURS

**MINI COOPER S**

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**NISSAN X-TRAIL 4WD**

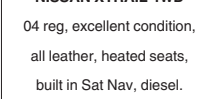
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# 9

## Local Information

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# 10

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## ClassifiedAds



The Kingsmead School pupil, far left, shows off his podium medal



Thumbs up from Josh Hiatt after a podium finish



Josh is to mount a BSB series challenge this year after deciding to make the switch



Josh stormed back on to the podium during round seven at red Lodge

# Josh hitting the Hiatts after run of misfortune

**THE future should look a lot brighter for rider Josh Hiatt after finishing a season he would probably rather forget.**

The 14-year-old suffered numerous mechanical failures competing in the FAB-Racing Metrakit 70 class.

Early promise was blighted by bike problems as the team, including his father Nigel, struggled to work out why the engine and gears kept failing.

But once the Metrakit GP70 was up and purring, the Heath Hayes teenager showed why he is one for the future by climbing back on the podium despite a severe lack of track time.

The eight-round series, mainly contested on go-karting tracks around the UK, ended with a second trip to Red Lodge before the final races at Mallory Park – a full race circuit used by the top British Superbike riders.

## Serious

It was on the big tracks that Josh, who attends Kingsmead School in Hednesford, really felt at home and gave his team serious food for thought over the 2017 campaign.

Nigel said: “We were back at Red Lodge for round seven and straight away he was on it, qualifying on pole.

“He came second in the first race and was just chuffed to bits to be back on the podium, especially after all the bike issues he’d had to deal with during the season.

“Everything looked like it was going down the pan until Red Lodge when finally it came together and he showed what he was capable of.

“He did particularly well because he had a bad start and had to fight his way back up to second again.”

But Josh’s favourite race was certainly the last as he tackled Mallory.

## SPORTING FEATURE

By James Driver-Fisher

***“Everything looked like it was going down the pan until Red Lodge when finally it came together.”***

The Leicestershire track is one of the country’s most renowned circuits.

“The last race was his favourite because it was a proper track some of the BSB riders use, rather than a go-kart track like a lot of the others,” said Nigel.

“He qualified fifth and came home in fourth. He had got into third place but he was pipped at the line and missed out on the podium.

“His bike just wasn’t as quick as the others pulling out of the corners.

“He loved making the step up to the next level, competing on the bigger track,” his father added.

Red Lodge was a good circuit all year for Josh, who secured a third place during round two earlier in the year before mechanical problems began to surface.

Everything went pear-shaped during round three at Rowrah, in the Lake District, when problems on the 70cc bike ended in a ‘Did Not Finish’ and a non-starter for race two.

He was also running third in the second race at Llandudno in the wet when he came off, causing engine problems and first gear issues.

Nigel said: “We had high hopes for round five at Whittington Mill, Northampton, because it’s where Josh

practises most Tuesday nights. Unfortunately, we suffered gearbox and engine problems and spent the entire weekend stripping the bike to try and find the problem.

“We ended up doing no racing at all.

“Lydd in Kent was round six but yet again we had the same engine problems.

“This time we managed to sort it out, but Josh was off the pace a bit because he had been off the bike for so long.

“Things went worse when he came off the bike again and smashed it up a bit, as well as hurting his leg, but he was okay.

“He tried to do the second race but was in too much pain so we ended up with another DNF.”

Now Hiatt is revving up for a new challenge. He is making the step up to race in the a British Superbike support series this year after securing a ride in the British KTM Cup.

## Supported

The youngster had options to return to the Metrakit series or join the Aprilia Championships.

The move from Josh, who has been supported by the Wigley twins during his burgeoning race career, is a move up from the FAB-Racing Metrakit 70 class he raced in last year.

Josh’s mother, Tracy, said: “The new bike has been purchased and he had a track day at Mallory Park.

“Josh loved the bike and got on well with it.”

Nigel said: “We’d like to thank Phil Turrell from Lower Road Service Centre, Hednesford, for providing us with tyres all season, which has saved us an absolute fortune.

“They cost us £130 a time and sometimes we can go through two sets a meeting, so his contribution has been absolutely brilliant.”

Hiatt is still after more sponsors, however. Anyone interested can call 07809 606248.



Testing went well for Josh before the start of an eventful Metrakit campaign



Josh on the bike he will be riding in the British Superbike support series this year



SPORTS DESK 01902 319531

CHRON.SPORT@EXPRESSANDSTAR.CO.UK

## Sam straps in to make Haye card

STOURBRIDGE fighter Sam Eggington will take on two-weight world champion Paulie Malignaggi in a shock pairing for the under-card of David Haye versus Tony Bellew.

Eggington will defend the WBC International welterweight title against the former IBF and WBA boss on March 4.

They will go toe-to-toe at a sold-out 02 Arena in London, live on Sky Sports Box Office, in support of the crunch clash between bitter rivals Haye and Bellew.

At 36, American veteran Malignaggi is 13 years older than his rival and has boxed at a far higher level.

Eggington's biggest scalp is a rip-roaring eighth round stoppage of Frankie Gavin in his last contest and he's now set his sights on another career-defining victory.

The former British champion, the mandatory challenger for the European title, said: "This is the big name and big card that I've wanted for some time."

"I am confident that I can beat him and beating him is a big scalp on my record. It puts me in that world bracket, which is where I want to be. I know it's going to be a big test and it's one that I'm going to rise to."

"Paulie is the man I want to beat. That name on my record will make people stand up and take notice and will make a splash in the US, too."

Malignaggi's Italian heritage allowed him to box for the European Union crown in 2015, outpointing Antonio Moscatiello on a Matchroom-staged Box Office bill in Manchester.

All the tickets, with only Haye-Bellew confirmed at the time, were snapped up in record time.

Matchroom and the 02 Arena's official ticket resale marketplace, StubHub, have some passes available at [www.stubhub.co.uk](http://www.stubhub.co.uk). Television viewers can purchase the Box Office package.

## Blue hoops stagger way through mud in testing 10-miler

A NUMBER of blue hoops from DK Running Club made the short trip to Mary Stevens Park for the testing 10-mile Stourbridge Stagger.

Kevin Duckworth was first back for the club in 25th place in 1:07.09, Mick Quane was 49th in 1:12.24, Mark Homer claimed 63rd position in 1:14.11, Helen Tromans claimed first in her age group and 84th overall in 1:16.28.

Richard Jones finished in 1:19.35 in 102nd, Tracey Alderson was 116th in 1:20.30, Rebecca Warren was 136th in 1:22.19, Rory Campbell in 137th in 1:22.23, Darren Marklew was 145th in 1:23.30, Andy Weaver 150th in 1:23.56, Hannah McGuire 180th in 1:26.37 and John Andrews 196th in 1:27.32.

Karen Doy finished in 1:32.14, Jacqui Elson-Whittaker in 1:33.21, Lisa Kendrick in 1:35.17, Kathryn Sneyd in 1:36.00, Carol Fisher also bagged an age group first in 289th in 1:36.50, Stephen Grosvenor in 1:37.38, Sue Payton in 1:38.26 and Gary Noke in 1:48.36.

None could match Chris Ashford, of Birmingham Running & Triathlon Club, who finished in 58.59.

## Hendrix still king of the rumble



Tom Mason with Andy Hendrix

A SPORTS bar in Wolverhampton witnessed two battles royal in one sitting as a wrestling feast rumbled on until the early hours.

An on-site show preceded a live screening of the 30th edition of World Wrestling Entertainment's Royal Rumble from Texas.

The 'Rileys Rumble' took place at Rileys Sports Bar with spectators staying on to watch the WWE bill.

Promoter and grappler Matt Powell, from Walsall, brought his

Pro Wrestling Live organisation to the Broad Street venue.

Their offering was also topped by their own 30-man over the top rope 'Rumble,' where 28 competitors joined the fray 30 seconds at a time after two started the bout.

British champion Andy Hendrix, of Halesowen, outlasted 29 opponents to retain his title.

Mad Dog Maxx - Powell's alter ego - opened the action with a victory over Big Paulie. CJ Rose and James Venom beat Saxon Cage

and Mr Selfie in a tag team match. Then came the Rumble, before the venue's giant screen beamed back the WWE blockbuster from the Alamodome around midnight.

Around 100 customers were still at Rileys at the culmination of the main event, where Randy Orton won the Rumble to ensure his spot at the top of the card for Wrestlemania 33, which takes place in Orlando on April 2.

The PWL will be back at Rileys to stage their alternative.

## Glassboys go second in the table

**Stourbridge 4 Ashton United 1**  
RAMPANT Stourbridge sailed up to second in the Northern Premier League thanks to Monday night's win at a sodden Amblecote.

Kayelden Brown got the ball rolling within three minutes, knocking in a rebound after Luke Benbow thumped an effort at keeper Luke Pilling.

Tom Tonks and Jordan Archer produced wonder goals to decide matters by half-time. Will Haining's instinctive volley for Ashton briefly jangled the nerves but Brown's delightful second alleviated any concerns.

Brown was agonisingly close to a hat-trick but a deft effort with the outside of his boot flew narrowly wide.

**Stourbridge 2 Coalville 0**  
PATIENCE was a virtue for Stourbridge as they ran out 2-0 victors over Coalville Town on Saturday.

Luke Benbow's header on half an hour looked to have set the Glassboys up for a comfortable victory but the marksman had to wait until deep into injury time to secure the points.

The Glassboys started strongly and Benbow pounced with the opener, meeting a Tom Tonks corner at the near post and heading powerfully home.

Kayelden Brown should have put the Glassboys out of sight after 55 minutes but his header from point blank range rattled the post.

Ryan Robbins and Anton Brown also had efforts fly wide for the visitors as nerves started to jangle at the War Memorial Athletic Ground.

Benbow sealed the points with his second on 94 minutes after former Wolves youngster and Shrewsbury loanee Ethan Jones saw his effort saved by the legs of Matthew Cotton and the rebound fell for Benbow to score his 21st league goal of the season.

## Heathens ride in for 2017 unveiling

CRADLEY HEATHENS will officially unveil their 2017 team next month.

All seven riders will be on stage at Cradley Heath Liberal Club on Friday, March 10, for the season launch night, with every penny made being split between them to help with pre-season preparations.

Hosted by club presenter Ian Jones, riders will chat to fans and there will be autograph and picture opportunities. A raffle and race jacket auction will be held to bolster funds.

The Heathens opening home league fixture will be at Perry Barr on Wednesday, March 29.

★★★

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# YELTZ RELY ON KARTEL STRIKE

**Halesowen Town 2 Stafford Rangers 2**  
**YOUTH team striker Kartel O'Neill-Martin rescued a point for Halesowen in the final minute with his first senior goal.**

But a draw had looked most unlikely as Stafford raced into a two-goal lead within the opening 13 minutes on Tuesday night.

Levi Reid lobbed into an empty net from 25 yards to put Stafford 1-0 ahead in the seventh minute after home goalkeeper Dan Platt needlessly raced out of goal to head clear from Mat Bailey's free-kick.

Reid added his second from the rebound after Platt had saved his spot-kick.

Stafford goalkeeper Adam Whitehouse tipped a great effort around the post from Ben Clarke in Halesowen's first effort in the 28th minute and the hosts went close again four minutes later when Whitehouse showed good reflexes to deny Tristan Dunkley.

### Close

The Yeltz did manage to pull a goal back in the 57th minute with a superb 25 yard strike into the top corner from Ben Clarke. Mitchell Tolley and substitute substitute Izak Reid both went close to adding further Stafford goals.

But O'Neill-Martin snatched a draw for Yeltz in last minute by smashing home a loose ball after the Stafford defence failed to clear Liam Slade's delivery into the penalty area.

### Matlock 2 Halesowen 1

HALESOWEN Town were denied an Evo-Stik Premier point by a last-gasp winner for the 10-man hosts on Saturday.

The Yeltz were under quite a bit of pressure throughout the game and Daniel Platt had to make some good early saves.

Matlock were a man down from the half-hour mark as Cleveland Taylor was dismissed for a reckless challenge. But the home side took the lead on 38 minutes when a shot from distance from Michael Williams went in off the post.

A great passing move set up substitute James Bennett Tindall for a 71st minute equaliser.

Yeltz's Lee Chilton had a goal ruled out for off-side and right at the death Nico Degirolamo got Matlock's winner.

## Boxing clever for club move



Councillor Kieran Casey, left, and head coach Darren McDermott at Mount Tabor Methodist Church

THE next generation of boxers are flocking to a Black Country club which is gearing up to move into new premises.

Run by former English middleweight champion Darren McDermott, around 90 members, aged between eight and 37, are currently being trained.

He has been running Brooklands Amateur Boxing Club from his back garden but will soon be relocating to Mount Tabor Methodist Church in Woodseton once renovation work has been completed.

The upstairs will be devoted to boxing, with a ring, punch bags and lots of floor space to allow for cardio workouts. "We hope to be in

the new gym as soon we can. We've definitely outgrown our old one because we've gone from having four members in 2011 to now having between 80 to 90," said McDermott, aged 38.

The club has been supported by Upper Gornal and Woodseton councillors Keiran Casey and Adam Aston who contributed a flagpole for the premises.

McDermott said: "The club is like a big family, it's very friendly and there is no attitude. We've got people of all races and backgrounds, we welcome everyone."

"I wanted the club to be like the one I went to when I was young, once you were in the club, you were part of the family."

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